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PHONOGRAPH

MONTHLY REVIEW

JUNE 1931

Some Phonographic Ills

R. D. Darrell

Problems of Sound
Reproduction Ben Drisko

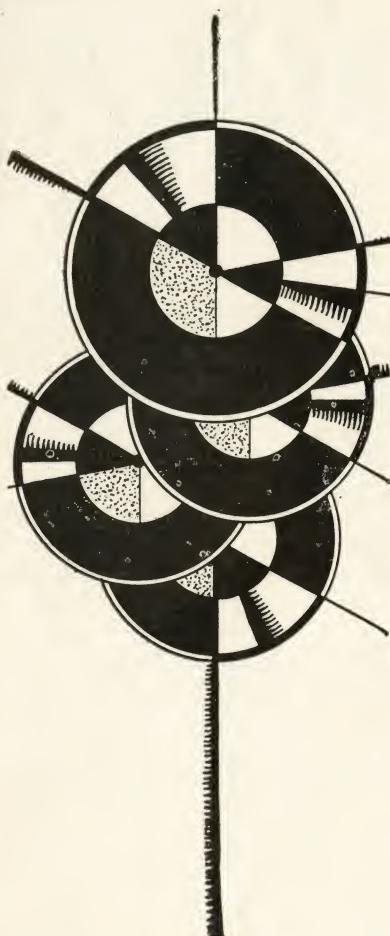
A description of phono-radio systems with
corrective suggestions for their
imperfections

Chevalier's Technique
George Brinton Beal

Reviews of Recorded
Music by

Sibelius, Brahms, Strauss, Satie,
de Falla, Gilbert & Sullivan, Goldmark
Mozart, Bach, Dvorak, Debussy

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The Phonograph Monthly Review

ROBERT DONALDSON DARRELL, *Editor*

AXEL B. JOHNSON, *Associate Editor*

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EDITORIAL NOTES

ARTURO TOSCANINI'S recent painful experience with hoodlumism received scant notice in the American press. Following his refusal to play the Fascist hymn at a concert in Bologna, he was set upon by a group of young Blackshirts as he left the stage door and was severely beaten up. The news reports gave no indication of any official attempt to seize and punish the "patriotic" rowdies. Mob rule and music have no common ground. But it ill behoves us to raise too righteous voices in condemnation. Karl Muck's treatment at the hands of Americans in 1918 was exactly of the same order of street corner assault on a great artist. The Italian brawlers were at least unruly youths; Dr. Muck's assailants were a Providence editor, a chairman of a state Liberty Loan Committee, a governor of Maryland, a Police Commissioner of Baltimore, Cardinal Gibbons, Bishop Manning, and a myriad other notables.

UNITED States Supreme Court decision settled a litigation case of long standing and far reaching consequences in the radio-phonograph world. The Langmuir patent—one of the most important held in the "patent pool" of the R. C. A., General Electric, Westinghouse Electric, American Telephone & Telegraph, and General Motors—was the subject of the suit between the De Forrest Radio Company and General Electric. The De Forrest Company had contended that unless the patent was set aside General Electric would have a virtual monopoly of the radio tube in common use. De Forrest won the case, and the secretary of the Radio Protective Association now claims that the independents who have been paying royalties to the "patent pool" on the Langmuir patent may not only recover these royalties, but should be able to recover triple damages for all the "injuries" they have received.

ADD to Mr. Seltzam's list of noted actresses who have recorded: Cecile Sorel. She was recently pictured in the New York Times before the microphone while recording scenes from *Tartuffe*, *Demi-Monde*, and *Maria Delorme*. The name of the recording company was not given.

Contributors To This Issue

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Some Phonographic Ills

By R. D. DARRELL

FOR the last year it has been apparent that all was not well in the phonographic world. That convenient scapegoat—general depression—has been saddled with the burden of responsibility, but discerning observers have realized that the world business crisis merely brought a fundamental unsoundness to the light. THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, like so many publications in other fields, has radiated an optimism gradually abandoning a cheery tone for one more desperate. But when conditions reach something of an impasse, as they seem to have done in our little sphere, they must be frankly faced without the spectacles of either optimism or pessimism.

Just what is wrong that the popular recordings obtain scantier and scantier sales, that celebrity releases are restricted more and more to re-pressings of European recordings, that two of the three leading companies feel forced to withdraw advertising support from the only independently published magazine devoted entirely to their cause? Granting that the practically complete abandonment of celebrity record advertising—even in so vital a medium as the P. M. R.—is necessitated by the decrease in business, isn't the cart being put before the horse somewhere? Is such stringent retrenchment likely to lead to any speed increase in celebrity record sales?

Popular disc sales have been cruelly pared by a combination of two factors: impaired buying ability on the part of the public, and the hamstringing of the standard 75c record by the unrestricted broadcast of these discs, morning noon and night, until both the tunes and the performances become a weariness even to the flesh of the enormous public whose musical needs are restricted to jazz alone. One class of popular discs still enjoys lively sales: the cheap records retailing around 25 or 30c—Melotone (put out by Brunswick), Harmony (by Columbia), Clarion, Banner, Crown, Diva, etc. These records are seldom broadcast.

The drop in instrument sales, perhaps the principal source of revenue in good times to the manufacturers, is usually attributed exclusively to the public's weakened buying power. But I wonder how much extravagant claims, and the constant succession of "perfect" machines rendered obsolete within a year by a super-perfection, have discouraged the public from the purchase of the larger models. The last season has seen a sudden reversal of this policy and the issue of a varied series of small, comparatively reasonably priced instruments. Yet the manufacturers have not yet faced the facts. Even the less expensive machines are not likely to sell in quantity for some time. With the principal source of income restricted to records, why not concentrate all efforts on their sale? Put out a turntable pickup outfit for plugging into a radio at a retail price of less than \$20. Sell them at bare cost if necessary, but get them out to musically minded people, and thus create the larger market for discs. (Standard Oil's old method in getting out stoves in China at less than cost in order to create a market for their oil might well be taken to heart.)

With celebrity records the conditions are quite different. Naturally their sale has been reduced by depression, but they have resisted with far greater tenacity than instruments of popular records. In this field alone is there a clear opportunity for the reestablishment of phonographic profits. Yet from the very beginning little or nothing has been done to promote it. The records have been brought out to be sure, but only reluctantly, and Europe has consistently led the way. The majority of the splendid recordings issued in this country have come out

unheralded and have subsided quickly into the oblivion of catalogue lists. A few enterprising dealers, a few magazines and newspapers have endeavored to give them the publicity they need, but without the backing of a vigorous advertising campaign, the promotion of musically-equipped dealers, and phonographic concerts in halls and over the radio, only a portion of the public could possibly be reached.

For nearly five years the P. M. R. has been hammering away at one point: there is a musical public in America; it supports opera, concerts, and recitals. Radio has succeeded to some extent despite the modicum of genuine musical entertainment it furnishes because it embarked on a lively campaign of public education, it appealed to the public's imagination, it sold itself. Television—with its exceedingly limited field—is already beginning to do the same thing. The phonograph has never attempted to reestablish itself in the public imagination. The majority of people still believe that the phonograph and records died with the coming of radio. We know that this was only its second birth; that it has only begun to come into its own. But the proselyting of a few enthusiasts cannot work miracles; it is astonishing that it has done as much as it has.

In short, the present ills are fully as much a result of approaching vital phonographic problems from the wrong angle—or dodging them entirely—as it is of unfavorable business conditions. Too many records have been put out; too few have been sold. Suppose another Lambert had applied his Listerine promotion campaign to records, would conditions in the phonograph industry be what they are today? The phonograph itself has kept up with the times, but its promoters have not. Even now that the futility of their policies has been convincingly demonstrated, means and courage—principally the latter—seem lacking to launch a more intelligently planned attack. Retrenchment is the only order. The interest in major recordings is offered the convenient sop of European repressions which are reasonably sure to cover at least their cost of issue and distribution. Once released they are left to their own resources. Publicity, the modern miracle worker, is abandoned.

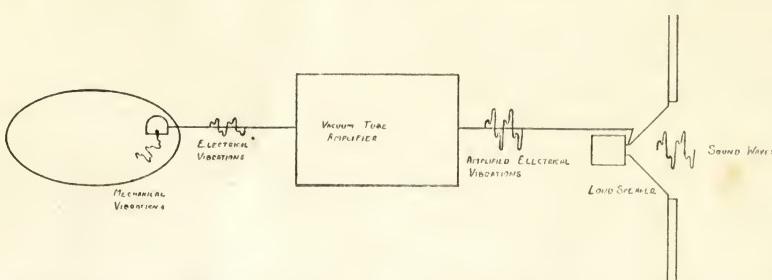
One of the repercussions of this policy is that this magazine which has depended exclusively on the phonograph is left with the support of only one of the three leading manufacturers. Without additional support from the public the magazine's future is very problematical. We still have faith in our present public's interest and energy, and now we turn to it for some expression of its ideas and suggestions. We believe with it that radio has buried itself almost hopelessly in commercialism, after having given the death blow to widespread amateur music making. We believe the phonograph to be the one remaining medium for musical enjoyment and culture in the home, the supreme medium for selective music. We believe that outside our own compact group of record conscious readers there is a vast public eager for the best in music and needing only to be approached properly to share our interest in the phonograph. If we are right in these beliefs, there is a very genuine need for the continued existence of THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW. The present policies of some of the manufacturers and the lack of private subsidy such as maintains symphony orchestras, opera houses, and other musical and literary endeavors, have placed that existence in jeopardy. Assurances of interest and support will enable us to go on with the work of phono-musical publicity that is so badly needed by recorded music today.

Problems of Sound Reproduction

By BEN DRISKO

A description of electrical phono-radio systems with special reference to loud speakers, and suggestions for the correction of some of their imperfections

*From Needle
Groove to
Sound Waves*



*A Visualization
of Electrical
Sound Production*

WITH the approach of perfection in phonographic recording and broadcast transmission, sealed with the practically complete approval of the greatest living artists, one must be either hypersensitive or wholly insensate not to find much to enjoy and to learn through sound reproducing media which have come to play so dominant a part in modern life. But while it is a very simple matter to place a record on a phonograph turntable and set it spinning, or to turn on a radio and tune in a broadcasting station, there are many details—mostly of a mechanical nature—which if improperly arranged may so detract from the faithfulness of the reproduction as to neutralize or negate the pleasure and interest of the audition. Most phonograph and radio owners are unaware of the nature of these imperfections and blame their individual instruments for faults which are generic. I shall endeavor to set forth some of these details in order that the reader may understand them better, and if he be of an experimental turn of mind perhaps also apply corrective measures.

Limiting our subject to the reproduction only, we must assume a comparatively faultless source of sound—either good recorded or broadcast material. If it be music, we must have a competent orchestra or other talent, making music in a room that is acoustically correct—which is to say that it is absolutely free from extraneous sounds and excessive reverberation. And the recording (or broadcasting) apparatus should be efficient over a musical range of at least seven octaves. (NOTE 1).

Factors of Phonographic Reproduction

Sound reproduction by the phonographic medium is roughly the reverse of the recording process in that mechanical vibrations of the needle are transformed into sound waves. To generate sound waves requires power. In a mechanical phonograph (utilizing a sound-box with a diaphragm

of mica, metal, or some other substance) this power must all come from the motion which the irregular sound track on a spinning record imparts to the needle, causing the diaphragm to vibrate, and thereby generating the actual sound waves. In a phonograph equipped with an electrical pick-up the amount of actual power which the needle delivers is considerably less, and substantially all of the sound generating power comes from the vacuum tube amplifier. Consequently there is less physical wear both on the needle and the record, (NOTE 2), and if the record-engraving be redesigned to take advantage of this difference in favor of the electrical process, the amplitude of the vibrations in the sound track (and hence its width) may be greatly reduced. Many more sound tracks can be put in the same space, resulting in a longer playing record.

The essential features of an electrical phonograph are a record turntable actuated by a motor; a needle; a pick-up; a vacuum tube amplifying system; and loud speaker. All have their limitations and are possible centers of sound reproductive faults. Since the speed of the turntable must be exactly the same at which the turntable was rotating when the recording was made, and since it is next to impossible to construct a motor which will run with undetectable variations in speed, we have at once a serious source of trouble: fluctuations in the pitch of the music played resulting from fluctuations in the speed of either the phonograph turntable or the original recording apparatus, (NOTE 3). If the phonograph motor is to blame it may be corrected at least in part by having the motor overhauled or equipped with a better governor. If the record has been recorded at some constant speed other than the standard 78 r.p.m., correct reproduction may be obtained by altering the speed of the phonograph correspondingly. Otherwise a symphony written and played in one key will be heard in one entirely different.

The needle problem scarcely falls within the scope of the present article. It is sufficient to say that whether they be Tungston, steel, Chromic, Burmese Colour, Electrocolor, or anything else, they should be selected and employed to obtain the maximum of pleasing tonal quality with a minimum of wear on the record.

The pick-up, amplifier, and loud speaker are so closely related electrically that it is very difficult for the layman to tell which, if any, is not quite up to par. Generally speaking, however, it is the loud speaker that is at once the most important and the weakest of the three—the literal voice of the modern electrical instrument and its most fertile source of acoustic shortcomings. Assuming that the other factors of the system are reasonably efficient in operation, and that the pick-up arm is properly designed to secure correct needle alignment, the instrument is still liable to a number of weakness which cannot be understood and eliminated without some working knowledge of the loud speaker and its associated acoustic problems.

Loud Speakers—Horn Type

The function of the loud speaker is to transform electrical energy into sound energy, and the more nearly constant the efficiency of this transformation—as frequency and intensity levels are varied—the better the speaker. The large paper cones, balsa wood and earlier horn types had no particular design, but were evolved by a process of trial and error into something passably pleasing to the average ear. Lately came genuine research by the technical staffs of the Bell Laboratories, Western Electric Company, and various others, and it is now possible to determine accurately the whats and whys and wherefores of loud speakers.

The horn type of speaker has been vastly improved and a new type—the so-called dynamic speaker—has been developed and virtually perfected. The former is still widely used in public address systems and in some theatre and phonographic work. It not only fulfills its primary function of changing electrical energy into sound energy, but it is also to some extent an acoustic transformer. Its diaphragm being small imparts vibration to a very small amount of air, but under relatively high pressure. As the sound wave travels down the horn the amount of air actuated increases and the pressure per unit area decreases, due to the increasing area of cross section of the horn, until by the time the large bell mouth is reached we have a recognizable sound instead of a buzzing diaphragm which we find if we take the horn away. The limitations of this acoustic transformer are impossible to explain without complicated mathematical computations which would be out of place here. Such computations reveal two things: the lowest note that the horn can radiate

is conditioned by the size of the final opening or bell mouth, (the larger the opening the lower the frequency that can be radiated); fidelity of reproduction at all frequencies is determined by the length of the horn. In order to get down to thirty cycles, which we should do to cover the lower pitch range of electrical records or a good broadcasting station, the bell mouth should have an area of from thirty to forty square feet, and to preserve fidelity of reproduction—especially with the low frequencies—the length of the horn must be inconveniently long, say fifteen feet over all from diaphragm to final opening. A horn of these proportions should — given a good diaphragm and associated apparatus—provide very acceptable reproduction. (NOTE 4).

Dynamic Type

The dynamic speaker operates in quite a different way from the horn type. The current passing through a coil of wire actuates the conical diaphragm to which it is attached, and which is free to vibrate as a unit nearly $3/16$ of an inch either side of its neutral position unconstrained either by its own stiffness or other rigid support. That is, it is inertia-controlled, as opposed to the stiffness-controlled diaphragm actuated by an armature in the horn type of speaker. The diaphragm of the dynamic speaker, due to its larger area and lower pressure, generates the sound waves directly without the necessity of any acoustic transformation. But there is a limitation here, exactly similar to the low frequency limitation of the horn. When the diameter of the diaphragm of the dynamic speaker is less than one-fourth the wave length of the sound to be radiated, *no radiation takes place*: the air next to the diaphragm simply sloshes back and forth from the front around the edges of the diaphragm to the back, and back again, instead of being alternately compressed and rarefied as is necessary for the radiation of sound. A simple calculation indicates that the dynamic diaphragm must be about the same size as the final opening of the horn speaker for comparable performance. Clearly a diaphragm of the proper size to radiate the low frequencies is no more practicable for general use than our fifteen foot horn with an opening of thirty to forty square feet.

However, in the case of the dynamic speaker an equivalent result may be obtained without enlarging the diaphragm itself. A rigid baffle board may be affixed to the frame of the loud speaker surrounding the diaphragm completely and attached with a substantially air-tight joint, but leaving the diaphragm free to vibrate. None of the ruinous sloshing of air around the edges of the diaphragm can take place, and it can be proved that the result is quite as efficient as if the vibrating diaphragm itself had been enlarged to the size of the non-vibrating baffle board.

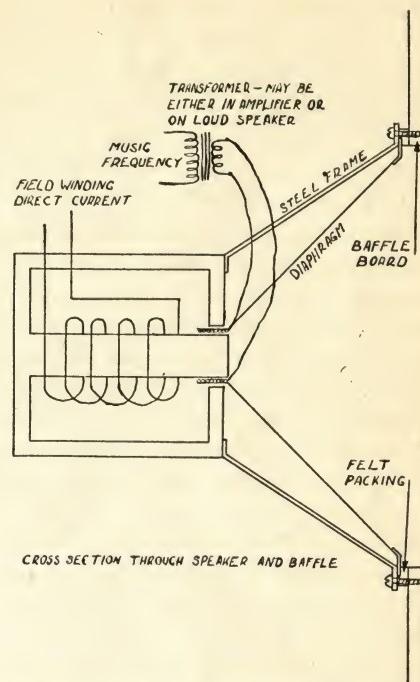
Blasts and Reverberation

But whether or not a speaker is able to radiate the lower frequencies there is a common failing in the faithfulness of reproduction due to one or more peaks or valleys in the frequency characteristic, resulting in individual notes sounding considerably louder or softer than they should. Perhaps one note of a phrase blasts or fades while the others are of equal intensity. By matching the pitch of the offending note on the piano it may be located definitely. Let us say for example that there is a scale passage of five notes beginning with middle "C". The third note in the passage, "E", stands out unpleasantly above the rest. Now play a different record and if the same phenomenon occurs with the "E" above middle "C", the chances are that the trouble is in the phonograph and that this particular frequency is not being faithfully reproduced. If there is no blasting of "E" in the second record, the fault is most likely in the original record and not in the instrument. It may be checked up again by playing the original record at a higher speed, raising the pitch of the music exactly one whole tone. If the loud note of the scale passage is now the second of the five and still matches the "E" of the piano, the phonograph is to blame; whereas if it is still the third—now matching the "F sharp" of the piano—the record is at fault.

Another but more obvious complication is the possibility that the extra volume at a particular frequency may be caused by reverberation, or sympathetic vibration, with something in the room or within the cabinet or loud speaker compartment of the instrument. Room reverberation may be reduced by transferring the instrument to another position or eliminated by proper padding of the walls or ceiling. Failing that, the phonograph must be transferred to another room entirely. Reverberation within the cabinet is a fault in the construction of the instrument, and may be corrected by padding, tightening the parts, or sometimes merely by leaving the back of the cabinet open.

Constructing a Baffle Board

As some of the more experimentally-minded of my readers may be sufficiently interested, I append a few hints on the proper construction of a baffle board which will enable the ordinary dynamic type of loud speaker to radiate the lower frequencies so essential to well balanced reproduction. My first baffle board, which proved very satisfactory, was made of two pieces of 3/4 inch five ply veneer glued together with a feathered joint, the joined board measuring six by six feet (obtained at a cost of less than ten dollars), (NOTE 5). A hole of the same size as the loud speaker opening was cut before gluing and the



Cross Sectional View of Dynamic Speaker and Baffle Board

loud speaker frame was screwed onto the back with a felt packed air tight joint, (NOTE 6). Another time I took out a window pane and fitted a smaller board (with a loud speaker similarly attached) into the window, allowing the remainder of the window and the house wall to act as the baffle board. This method of course is less sightly and requires some protection for the loud speaker against the weather, but it has the great advantage that extraneous sound radiated from the back of the diaphragm never gets into the room to cause standing waves, reverberations, or reactions back on the diaphragm. The volume of sound was noticeably less from the same setting, but the music was much clearer. Another man has used a tightly fitting closet door as his baffle board with excellent results. When this is done it is best to pick a closet of about 120 cubic feet in capacity and to hang it full of old clothes or other soft materials to prevent the same annoying resonances and reverberations which are so likely to mar the performance of the ordinary cabinet loud speaker installation, (NOTE 7).

Undoubtedly the average phonograph or radio user will be inclined to accept his individual instrument and all its inherent weaknesses "as is", and to dismiss my suggested tests and corrective measures as troublesome experimentation by no means essential to the pleasure he obtains at present from records and broadcasts. But the laymen's ear is too ready to accept musical shadow for the substance. The musician and theorist realize that the reproduction of even the best of modern instruments covers only a portion of

the musical range; even within that range there may be many imperfections. Until one has heard a perfectly balanced instrument equipped with a loud speaker able to radiate faithfully frequencies over a range of at least from thirty to five thousand cycles, one can have no conception of the full realism and effectiveness of modern sound reproduction. Even the untrained ear can recognize the tremendous difference between the half-good and the good, *once it has a criterion of performance*. And while theoretical perfection is still an unattained goal, it is possible even for the amateur to correct the deficiencies of the ordinary good radio or phonograph so as to attain results that are infinitely more faithful technically as well as incomparably more pleasing to the ear.

NOTES

NOTE 1. The recording or transmitting apparatus should have a flat (i.e. impartial) frequency characteristic from say thirty cycles to five thousand cycles. Middle "C" being 250 cycles, this range would extend approximately from three octaves below middle "C" to four and a quarter above. More would be better, particularly on the high frequency end in order to get the higher harmonics or overtones of the various instruments in the orchestra. There is a very good possibility that this upper range may be extended in the case of broadcast transmitters, (in a few instances it already has been) but in phonographic recording needle scratch and surface noise become objectionable if much over four or five thousand cycles is allowed to come out.

2. There is less physical wear on needle and record with a properly constructed pick-up. Some pick-ups, however, are either so heavy a weight on the record or so stiff in operation as to cause even more record wear than mechanical phonographs.

3. Pitch fluctuation may also be due to incorrect centration of the record. The fairly common wavering of the pitch of sustained notes near the end of a record is usually due to this purely mechanical fault. Imperfectly centered records may be corrected, but the method is tedious and at the best a make-shift. One should rather take pains to check up in correct centration before purchase of the record.

4. Many readers will protest that they have heard all kinds of low notes from much smaller horns than the above. Here again mathematics and laboratory experiment reveal some surprising things. The "C" three octaves below middle "C" on the piano is nominally thirty-two cycles in frequency, but the note also contains harmonics or overtones all the way up to perhaps as high as one thousand cycles. The human ear is so constituted that the fundamental (in this instance thirty-two cycles) and some of the lower harmonics may be entirely missing from a sounded note and yet the tone will be easily recognizable as to pitch and identity (piano, organ, string, etc.) If too many of the lower harmonics are missing the naturalness or depth of the tone is lost and the result is an unpleasant squeaking or rasping quality.

An upright piano is practically incapable of radiating anything below about fifty cycles in sufficient quantity to be heard; all that we do hear of such notes is the overtones. A concert grand, however, due to its greatly increased radiating surface actually radiates the fundamental frequencies. A radio set or electrical phonograph which goes down to say one hundred fifty cycles sounds quite fair to the inexperienced ear, but when it is compared with one going down to thirty cycles even the untrained ear can detect the far greater depth and substance of tone in the latter.

5. The size of the baffle board is determined by the lowest frequency one wishes to radiate. Letting "N" represent this frequency in cycles per second, and "D" the diameter in feet to be determined for the baffle board, the equation which expresses the relationship between these factors is

$$D = \frac{1100}{4N}$$

(1100 is the distance in feet covered in one second by any sound wave—regardless of its pitch.)

Conversely the lowest frequency a given instrument can radiate can be found. In this case the cabinet itself acts as a baffle board and "D" is the distance of the shortest path from the front of the diaphragm around the edge of the cabinet and back to the base of the diaphragm.

$$N = \frac{1100}{4D}$$

6. In mounting the speaker in a baffle board the connecting wires will generally have to be lengthened by splicing. These wires are four in number—two to the field coil (carrying direct current) and two carrying voice or music frequency. If the length of the latter two wires is to be over ten feet or so they should be two separate wires (i.e. not a double conduit) and of fairly large size, say No. 14 B. & S. gauge, and should not be run closely together. Otherwise there is likely to be a capacity leakage of the higher frequencies.

7. Reverberation is present to some extent in any room or hall and too much of it can certainly ruin any kind of sound reproduction. Probably we have all noticed how much more beautiful music sounds over water, although I dare say comparatively few have figured out that the reason lies in the fact that here there are no walls or other sound reflecting surfaces nearby to cause reverberation. The same effect may be accomplished indoors by padding the walls and ceiling with some nonreflecting material. So far as I know, Gimco Rockwool Flexfelt (applied over battens to leave an inch or so of dead air space next to the wall) is the best material for this purpose at present. This type of sound-proofing has been used for years in talking film, broadcast, and recording studios.

Another source of distortion lies in mechanically transmitted vibrations from the speaker back to the vacuum tubes, resulting in an abnormal reinforcement of certain tones. This of course is eliminated when the speaker is removed from contact with the amplifier.

PLAN A DAY IN PHILADELPHIA THIS SUMMER

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Chevalier's Microphone Technique

By GEORGE BRINTON BEAL

A superb art created from apparently meager means

THE voice of Maurice Chevalier has an arresting quality that catches, and holds, attention, as no other voice since the broadcasting days of ex-president Calvin Coolidge. Not that M. Chevalier has a voice that in any way resembles, save in the attributes stated, that of the sage of Northampton. Examining it in some detail one must discount the fact of his amazing, and sometimes amusing, mangling of the English language. Great as this factor is as a considered asset of his success in the public ear, it is negligible in comparison to the fundamental charm of the man's voice itself.

His smile, which helps a lot in picture appearances and upon the stage, is of no great use either on recordings of his performances or over the radio. Yet, so cleverly does he manage to make his voice represent the emotion he is trying to convey, he can make that smile, once seen, a telling part of his purely vocal performance.

The quality that is in the Chevalier voice has its principal ingredient in showmanship, that intangible something that makes great performers, great artists, even an occasional genius. It is what he makes that voice do for him that makes him the success that he unquestionably is. He possesses a rare sense of timing. He applies it in a curious jig-saw fashion to the misuse of spoken English. He uses English words but French phrasing, a simple, and ever effective trick of showmanship. It can be done in the intermixture of any language and has been, as the memory of any one familiar with most of the great comedians of the past will readily attest.

Hoarse, and displeasing, were it not for the inherent charm, this voice of Chevalier's is capable of doing more tricks than a flea circus. Back of the vocal instrument of Maurice Chevalier stands a master director. He guides it along the way he wishes it to go with flawless ingenuity and tireless care. Every tone, every intonation, every phrase, is a carefully studied one. He is too great an artist to leave even the tiniest detail to chance. When he has mastered the details of what he is going to say, or sing, or both; then he puts his voice through its paces. He corrects and adds or subtracts as his showman's ear advises. The finished, smooth-flowing, seemingly spontaneous performance that you hear, is the result.

Chevalier is a magnificent example of what can be done with a very little talent skillfully handled.

His voice, effective as it is, has no great range. His lower tones are throaty, his higher ones bordering, to put it kindly, on the nasal. In between there is practically nothing to work with. Yet, master of his own powers, slight as they came to him, he works what is little less than a miracle by means of them.

His voice, in order to give complete satisfaction, must be heard at precisely the proper pitch. There is a tendency, unfortunately necessary in motion picture houses, to give it too great a volume. Tuning in Chevalier on the radio, extreme care is necessary not to get him to high up the scale, or too low down, for real enjoyment. Detuned above or below the proper phase, Chevalier becomes in one case a growling, rasping sort of creature; on the other an effeminate, high pitched vocal creation bordering on sheer idiocy.

Few present day performers have succeeded in gathering to the skirts of their talent so great a following in three such differing mediums of expression as the stage, the screen and the radio, not to include his great drawing power as a recording artist as in reality but a variation of the radio, from the standpoint of technical consideration.

What makes an artist great is, and must ever remain, something of a mystery. Certainly there are few people now before the public who have less real talent, discounting only showmanship, than this same M. Chevalier, from the Paris music hall stage. Equally certain, the rich, sincere, flexibility of his voice, utilized as a means of conveying emotion, and of awakening emotional response, practically at will, is without parallel in the lesser arts today. Chevalier is unquestionably the uncrowned king of the theatre of the voice. And he makes whatever he does worth hearing.

Chevalier's Recordings

CHEVALIER'S American recordings have been confined almost entirely to the hit-songs from his films. These are available in English versions in the Victor domestic catalogue, and in French in the Victor French supplement. The same records are listed also in the French H. M. V. catalogue. Before he came to America, however, he made a considerable series of the charming topical and semi-folk songs in French that he sings so delightfully and which reveal his talents more characteristically the songs of American origin to which his repertory has been largely confined of late. These were recorded by the French Columbia Company and are available in this country through the leading importers, some of whom provide special albums for the complete series.

Records in the Church

By HERBERT E. EVANS

The Advisor to Religious Activities at Columbia finds records a solution of small churches' musical problems

THROUGHOUT the Protestant church there is a decided tendency for a more beautiful service of worship and a return to the use of old liturgical forms. Increasingly the packing-box type of church is giving way to Gothic and Georgian architecture. Ministers interested in beautiful services are confronted with the problem, however, of the lack of talented musicians available for the small churches. In fact it is rather sad to note that it is increasingly difficult to secure even a pianist in the average rural church and to secure a good one is a prize indeed.

During the last summer my office conducted an experiment in the use of a combination radio and electrola in a country church. Through the kindness of a leading company an electrical phonograph was installed in the small village church of Wanakena in the western Adirondacks. The average attendance of the church usually consisted of twelve older people. While the experiments were under way during the summer months the congregation averaged over one hundred people. Part of this interest was due to the use of fine music.

The phonograph was concealed behind a screen and was operated by a young man of the church. The service opened with an organ record played by Mark Andrews or one of the English organists. The phonograph was not used for hymns but was used again after the offering where such records as *The Festival Te Deum* sung by the Trinity choir, *Adoremus Te* by the Florentine choir, *Saviour, When Night Involves the Skies* by the Trinity choir, *Lord, I am not Worthy* sung by Father Bracken, *How Beautiful Upon the Mountains* sung by Marion Talley, *Christ Went into the Hills* by John McCormack, Brunswick records of the St. Matthew Passion, many of the solos and choruses in Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* as recorded (complete) in England by Columbia, were played. The sermon was usually followed by a solo. Besides organ records used in the opening and close of the service orchestral records were used such as Bach's *I Call Upon Thee Jesus*, and *La Grande Pâque Russe* (Russian Festival of High Easter) as played by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

The response was unusual and the experiment is being continued by this office during the year. The new Riverside Church of New York City of which Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick is the pastor is using some of these records in its program of religious education. Lectures are being given to Young People's Societies in the various churches starting with the Gregorian Chants and Palestrina and giving demonstrations of the modern masses and religious works. The number of religious works recorded by American companies is very limited and records have been secured from representatives in New York of the Columbia and His Master's Voice Companies of England, the Polydor and other foreign companies.

Increasingly the Brunswick, Columbia, and Victor companies are producing a better type of religious records. The recent issue of the Gregorian Chant records is an example of this new interest. When this experiment was proposed objections were raised to the use of canned music in churches. The new instruments are so fine and the tone so perfect that with the proper regulating of the records it is possible to secure a very worshipful attitude in a church.

It was discovered that the smaller church congregations found the Trinity choir record of *Saviour When Night Involves the Skies* more interesting than Palestrina numbers done in Latin especially at the beginning of the experiment.

The minister conducting the service explained at the time of his announcements the meaning and words of some of the Latin records and a response was stimulated. The experiment continued for fifteen weeks and by the end of the summer the finest of music was appreciated.

The use of recorded music for churches will fill an interesting need especially in the field of modern religious education. The experiment is continuing this winter with children's groups and with older people. The average minister suffers from lack of education in music. He may have had one or two courses in music in his church education but these are of an elementary nature and he is unable to work adequately with the music program of his church. It would be a fine thing to install these machines in the theological seminaries to demonstrate to classes the various types of religious music available and to increase in the student an appreciation of real music. The department of music in Columbia University is doing this with music students who can not afford to attend the various symphonies and other music events in the city. A group of Columbia College students who are planning to enter the ministry will be invited to use this equipment as they conduct services in small churches.

The Riverside Church has a very extensive equipment with remote control amplifier and record reproducing apparatus installed by Bloodworth, Inc. Before the service while the organist is busy with his choir religious organ records are used to assist in creating an atmosphere of worship. Wednesday evening meetings of this church are constantly using this equipment. At a church in Dover, Delaware, a concert phonograph has been installed which is used in some of the week night activities.

The response from churches indicates that perhaps this new use of recordings will fill a real need in the church for it is being received by church people everywhere with skepticism at first and then with growing appreciation and enthusiasm.



Pepe del Campo

(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

Sr. del Campo, who records for Victor, is the premier radio tenor of Havana, Cuba,—broadcasting from the American station CMC, of the Cuban Telephone Company

Paris Letter

By RENE LEVY

The complete "Werther" Album and other French releases

ONE cannot really love Massenet, whose feminine sensibility, croticism, and superficial swooning are too often the expression of a latent vulgarity. One can even detest his constantly setting manly literary masterpieces to music surcharged with voluptuousness, whose melodies float in the memory, undulating and lascivious, as the heady fragrance of a girl lingers in the atmosphere of a room. One cannot fail to acknowledge his prodigious ability, the very genuine allurement which frees itself from his pliant and limpid melodic twinings, and the moving grace that now and then flowers in the brief interludes with a perfection never surpassed in any other French opera. These qualities are particularly perceptible in *Werther*, whose first and third acts are unquestionably the composer's masterpiece. *Werther* is indubitably the work of Massenet which contains the most music, and the one in which stylistic unity has been most carefully and most felicitously maintained. Of course, as everywhere else in Massenet, the writing strikes us today as almost tasteless by reason of its sensuality and prettiness. The part given to the violoncello, to the intensely vibrant violins, offends us like a too sweet sirup. But, after all, that is the fashion of his period. Who predicts that in a few decades the hardness of M. Strawinski, the hideousness of some of our "atonals" and the determined intent to displease which animates all of these gentlemen, will not seem as old-fashioned and ridiculous as the insipidities of Massenet's time?

Moreover, this hardly concerns us. *Werther's* popularity, after a certain initial period of coldness and incomprehension, has not diminished in almost forty years, and each time the unhappy candidate for suicide prepares to die on the stage, a goodly public spills ready tears over his agony. One can certainly be assured of the material success of the complete edition in fifteen discs which has just been issued by Columbia, the more so that it is of irreproachable musicianship and technical magnificence without equal. It assuredly constitutes the most beautiful effort of lyrical recording accomplished in France in the existence of the phonograph. The three protagonists are M. Georges Thill (*Werther*), Mme. Ninon Vallin (*Charlotte*), and Mlle. Germaine Féraldy (*Sophie*). A more judicious or happier choice could not have been made. M. Thill is the best French tenor. Mme. Vallin has not always been as favored by the microphone as one could have wished, and she has perhaps made too many discs of dubious quality, but even the least successful are still interesting since they capture the echo of her voice, the refined intelligence and chaste sensibility of her interpretations. Here, however, the quality of the recording has been watched with particular care, and Charlotte is worthy of *Werther*. As for Mlle. Féraldy, she is a charmingly youthful and ingenuous Sophie. The other performers are excellent. The orchestra is conducted by M. Elie Cohen, who has made much progress since his unhappy experience with *Carmen*, and he gives us today a *Werther* conforming to the best traditions, heavily voluptuous, and shot with all the colors of life and passion.

I have already indicated the merits of the recording. These fifteen discs have obviously been the object of exceptional care as to their clarity and the delicacy with which the smallest details are captured on the recording wax, and I find it scarcely criticizable that there is a somewhat marked preponderance of the voices over the orchestra. The schoolmaster's injunction to the children, in the very first measures of the score: "Pas trop de voix, pas trop de voix!" could have been observed with profit by the singers, who read the dynamic indications throughout in constant augmentation: *ppp* becomes an ordinary *p*, when it is not an *mf*, which with them becomes an *f*, or even *ff*. However, by virtue of the other qualities of the performance, I am ready to absolve these

minor sins which a little experimentation in the choice of needles will largely correct; also such imperceptible defects (apparent to the exacting listener) as George Thill's little break on the A sharp of the second verse of the *lied d'Osseian*, and the somewhat insecure pitch of the last note of this air. These minor blemishes do not exceed the margin of imperfection of all human achievement, and ever so, they are compensated by the beautiful quality of the neighboring passages. Charlotte's *Prière*, recorded on the other side of this disc, is truly a magnificent bit, one of the moments when Mme. Ninon Vallin has fairly surpassed herself.

The space which I have devoted to this considerable recording prevents me from enlarging as I should like on the other excellent recordings issued in France this last month, but I must at least mention the splendid performance of Mozart's Flute Concerto in D major by our incomparable Marcel Moyse and an orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola (French H. M. V.), and a highly distinguished interpretation of Mozart's Quintet in E flat for wind instruments and piano by the Société des Instruments à vent de Paris. I should add that the latter work has already been performed, without pretension but very pleasingly, by a quintet for Pathé, which has also published the charming similarly scored quintet by Beethoven.

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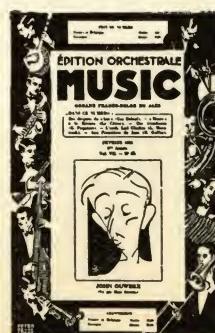
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The Editor does not accept any responsibility for opinions expressed by correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned letters, but only initials or a pseudonym will be printed if the writer so desires. Contributions of general interest to our readers are welcomed. They should be brief and written on one side of the paper only. Address all letters, to CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN, Editorial Department, THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, 5 Boylston Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

A Recorded Concerts Guild

Through the courtesy of the Editor I am making an announcement which should be of great interest to all lovers of recorded music residing in Greater New York.

Phonograph records have always been associated with the idea of music in the home. The great advances made both in instruments and quality of reproduction, the increased attention being given records in the newspapers and magazines and the fact that recently a well-known dancer discarded the use of a piano and substituted, with great success, symphonic records as accompaniment for her recital, have convinced me that records have far greater possibilities than mere home performance. I therefore am forming, with a few friends, the *Recorded Concerts Guild* which, while ready to keep in step with any future developments, will confine itself, in its initial program, to a series of about fifteen concerts every two weeks or so in the period commencing early October and extending to the latter part of April. Tentatively, there will be nine or ten symphonic programs, three or four of chamber music, a complete oratorio and other items to be decided upon.

The Guild has no backing and can exist only upon the membership dues of those who join. To meet the great expense required for renting of a hall, printing of circulars, announcements, tickets, programs, stationery, postage, etc., it will be necessary to pay the dues in one lump sum in advance, at most the mere price of a couple of records. No set figure has been decided upon because it will depend on the size of the membership.

The usual method of playing a lot of miscellaneous records is not, I feel, sufficient reason for the Guild's existence. Reproduction of our programs, through the finest electrical instruments, will be made in a manner which does away with the old handicap of breaking off the music while record sides are being turned. I need not say anything further about the added enjoyment to be derived from listening to the music being unfolded without the interruption we know so well. The next attraction is the important one of programs. They will be calculated to hold the attention of those who love the finest in music. The Guild will draw on all foreign and domestic records. The programs will follow the lines of those heard in the concert halls, but of finer content. They will be free from the hackneyed items which cause intelligent concert goers to froth at the mouth and write letters of indignation to the press.

I believe that if a crowd can gather around a loud speaker to hear the results of a prizefight, there is no reason why a group of intelligent music lovers cannot gather about a loud-speaker and hear what they like under the ideal conditions set forth above. It will be a proud moment when we can offer concrete evidence that such folks do not need the external trappings of the opera house or concert hall to lure them into listening to music. There are several halls under consideration, varying in size and rental. Final arrangements for one cannot be made until I see just how many people will wish to support this movement. I want everyone interested to communicate with me at once and I shall be glad to give further information regarding programs, membership fee and other details which cannot be included in this announcement. I shall also arrange to have a meeting of prospective members, where everything can be discussed satisfactorily. Please address me c/o U.C.S. Co., 625 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.

EMIL V. BENEDICT

Correct Centering

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

To revive a topic that has evidently languished in your magazine, I would like to inquire concerning the amount of bad centering that gets by in good records of aristocratic labeling. An answer to a complaint about a year ago in this column stated that bad centering was relatively rare and isolated, but my experience has been to the contrary. Out of sixty-one electrical red seal records I have examined, twenty-three are well centered, nineteen passably, sixteen poorly, and three scandalously—a rather large proportion of the latter two categories which would be larger if I had not refrained from buying some records during the last year or so for want of good copies. Nor are examples isolated—out of six available copies of Paderewski's Chopin Etudes, the best is positively unpleasant to listen to on one side; it took three sets of the Rachmaninoff Concerto to produce one that was passable, and the same applies to the Brandenburg Concerto. I find fewer lapses in Columbia records, nevertheless a set of the Davidsbundler Dances ordered with centering specified was an extreme offender, and another set sent to replace it still has one poor side. A particular customer dealing with a record department less anxious to please than that of the Thearle Music Co., here would have found himself unhappily placed.

A less frequent defect is variation in pitch—as in Horowitz' Scarlatti Capriccio, Rachmaninoff's Polka and Troika, side two of Cortot's Rigoletto paraphrase. Mr. Benedict's treatment after his excursion some time ago into the realm of record prices was on the whole rough, but assuming the answers his letter evoked to be sound, is it not still reasonable that when companies have recorded some of the greatest artistry, priced accordingly, the buyer should be guaranteed against such elementary mechanical shortcomings as those mentioned?

San Diego, Calif.

H. C. A.

Pickup Perfection

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEWS

No doubt your attention has often been directed either from experience or correspondence to the problem of record grooves breaking down. Until last month I have had no end of difficulty with wear on records. I have used four different pickups and every conceivable type of needles from shadowgraphed steel of all different sizes to two kinds of non-metallic needles from England. The result has been invariably the same; if the records contain high volume levels and are played with anything like full volume, the grooves flake out and in some cases the needle jumps grooves, many times refusing to pass the troublesome spot. I had ruined a large number of valuable records and was unable to get any information or aid from any source. My turntable was level, and the pickup arm moved freely, the motor speed was correct and steady. Needless to say there was considerable blast in the speaker in playing records with full volume.

I began to notice that records which I loaned the local broadcasting station gave them no trouble at all. In a consignment of new records I played one side of one of them and noticed the familiar white flecked places. There was also some blast. Then I took the record into the station and played the other side, which was of the same movement and tonal level. It played through the same kind of needle without the slightest blast and no signs of wear. I thereupon decided to incur the expense of discarding my old equipment and installing the Western Electric "Reproducer No. 201A" with oil-damped pickup. It has now been in use over a month and has not given the slightest trouble about blasting, has not damaged any of the records even when playing at a tremendous volume and has overcome the old fault of over-emphasis of the bass, so common in the last few years. (These machines which have so much bass really get it by cutting off the high frequencies.) The high frequencies are what, to a large extent give the overtones for the entire scale, high and low. When the overtones are absent the tone colors of the different instruments lose their true character. I have even been able to play those records which had developed flaws

which the other types of pickup would not play past. This Western Electric reproducer is the type used in the talking pictures and is very expensive and is moreover restricted to only certain places where it may be used. The point is that there really is a type of pickup which will really give perfect service due to an entirely different working principle. If sufficient interest were shown by record manufacturers and all concerned in sound reproduction it seems to me that the benefits of this much superior manner of playing records could be made generally available.

So far as non-metallic needles are concerned, they are a constant source of trouble in breaking down in the middle of a loud passage, to say nothing about the nuisance of trying to keep a point on them. With a careful test it is found that they do not bring out all the various frequencies out evenly throughout the scale.

In steel needles a long thin needle can not bring out the high notes. This makes the bass sound louder and is a useful way of making those records which are weak in lower notes sound more balanced. For properly balanced records such as the Brunswick Polydor the thick needles provide ample bass and bring out trueness of tone quality that is lacking in the others.

Superior, Wisconsin

V. G. BREWSAUGH

De Reszke Re-pressings

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

I note that some progressive Englishman has acquired the matrices of the old Lilli Lehmann records and is offering pressings at a very reasonable price. This is admirable for Lehmann's admirers are still numerous. I wonder if it would not be a good plan to approach the Columbia Company in regard to pressings of an early Edouard DeReszke record. I understand that they still have the masters and it might impress them if I took a survey of the phonophiles who may be interested. If all who are thus interested will drop me a card, I will wait until I get a collection and will then forward them to the Columbia people with a suggestion that they consider unearthing one of these priceless master records. 318 Reservoir Ave., Bridgeport, Conn. WILLIAM H. SELTSAM

A Diagnosis of Phono Ills

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

It would seem that harsh criticism in the past would deter H. M. V. from continuing its practice of issuing hybrid Wagnerian sets, but such seems not to be the case, if one were to judge from the remarks made of the recent Siegfried set. Here we have in one small, inadequate album records which touch the high spots, with a terrific letdown in the latter part of the set, coupling inferior recording with inferior singing. Aside from the shabby treatment accorded Wagnerites in making only ten records of such a work, must we continue accepting four conductors, three orchestras, the world's best and worst Siegfrieds, two Wotans and so on? The practice is confined only to the Wagnerian dramas. It may be well to remember that the folks who buy them are also great purchasers of the other albums.

It is most regrettable to find that depression in Europe has caused a great falling off in the number of high grade records released within the past year. Conditions apparently have deterred the recording companies from releasing the usual number of album sets and they now make shorter works as well as remake some of their electric records, particularly Coates' Wagnerian records. It was something passing and will be discontinued later, but is it actually necessary? The continued and very persistent release of such numbers as *The Prelude* of Rachmaninoff and other chestnuts is not very encouraging in view of the masterpieces whose existence seems to be a profound secret to the recorders.

According to Compton Mackenzie, an official of one of the larger British companies has explained that practically all of the larger works continually heard in the concert halls have been recorded and the public will not buy such works as are not thoroughly familiar to them. Well, does it not seem that the time is ripe for the companies to begin advertising or ballyhooing? The recording of hackneyed works does not require much propaganda to sell them but is different with works less familiar. Why not plug them? The new Sibelius recordings have found a responsive chord in the breasts of the intellectuals and it will require plenty of publicity for them to bring about a demand for some more Sibelius recordings. The public must be made to buy the

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first ones. The rest will follow. Sibelius himself is self-effacing, but we all ought to take up the cudgels in his behalf. A similar drive would create a market for some symphonies of Mahler or Bruckner. It really is discouraging to note that the recorders must turn to remaking earlier Wagnerian releases. Who asked for them? It is encouraging to note, however, that in this country in spite of depression, we are not receding a step in the quantity and quality of our releases. It does seem strange, however, that for the past few months it is impossible to obtain records even from the current monthly lists. They are out of stock and the wholesalers are unable to get them. Looks as though the companies are too scared to manufacture them, thinking that there will be no demand.

I wonder how many have read, in the December 1930 number of the *Gramophone*, the very interesting article by Myron H. Garrett, evidently a Chicagoan. His words are pessimistic and it probably will awaken gramophiles to the fact that things are not as rosy as they look. We have the paradox of the recorders turning out bigger and better things and refusing to manufacture them in sufficient numbers to supply the demand. The cult in this country is growing smaller and not larger. Anyone can see that. Mr. Garrett probably is correct in saying that the first rush of new electrical album sets excited the fanatics, from the effects of which they have cooled off to some extent. Personally, I believe that the recording companies have done very little to stimulate interest. They have turned out the records and never made an effort to introduce sound salesmanship methods to sell them. They have left it to your publication to do that. There is practically no advertising of records. One of the major companies carried an ad on their album sets in the Carnegie Hall programs, but this season it no longer appears. H. M. V. for reasons of economy gave up its ad in the page opposite the commencement of Mr. Mackenzie's editorial in the *Gramophone*. We may like to lay it all to business depression, but I incline to the belief that the first excitement is over and now we are cooling off.

New York City

EDW. J. ALLEN

Reviews of New Records

**Special reviews of larger works ✓ classified reviews of domestic releases
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En Saga

SIBELIUS: *En Saga*, Op. 9 (3 sides), and *Valse Triste* (1 side), played by a SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by EUGENE GOOSSENS. VICTOR 9925-6 (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

Early as *En Saga* is, it surpasses Sibelius' later symphonic poems and even the first of the symphonies for terseness, muscularity, and effectiveness. It is not a lyric miniature, like the *Swan of Tuonela*, rather a musical drama in brief, encompassing something of the great breadth and vividness of the symphonies within more restricted bounds. The work is generally thought to be programmatic (although the composer has never given the slightest hint of any context beyond the general implication of the title) and the indefatigable Mrs. Newmarch laments the absence of a frank indication of its literary basis. To her it "certainly suggests the recital of some old tale in which the heroic and pathetic elements are skillfully blended." Dr. Niemann takes it to be the story of Finland, so obvious that no program is needed to "tell us at every moment what hovered before the composer." With all deference to such authorities, I hear no depiction of the lot of the Finns, nor do I feel the need of any literary plot to tell me that the wild dance-like principal theme "means" thus and so, or that the magical coda with its dusky clarinet solo over muted strings and a pianissimo roll on the cymbals paints any particular scene. It is quite possible that Sibelius had some ancient legend in mind, but more probable (since he was careful not to indicate any source) that he had merely the qualities of many legends in mind. It is not only unnecessary to know the "story," but it is unnecessary that there be any definite story, to hear the work as a musical legend, tinged with mystery, desperate gaiety, and poignant despair, a music drama.

Of old unhappy far-off things
And battles long ago.

As such it is a masterpiece of orchestral tone coloring, of tremendous rhythmic propulsion, and sinewy long-flung melodic line. The variety of effect in so comparatively small a canvas is amazing. Contrast for example the coda with its tonal half-lights and shifting shadows, with the blazing force of the passage for trumpets on page 34 of the orchestral score (Brietkopf & Hartel), or the nervous shuddering strings on page 48, or again the long passage immediately following, with its heavy accents on the second beat by the violins and violas, and on the fourth by the 'cellos and basses, against the vigorous theme in the brass and wood (unfortunately completely botched in the recording). Yet these and a dozen effects of nearly equal brilliance (the least of which would be sufficient to establish the reputation of another composer as an orchestral wizard) are used only as the exact medium for the musical content, and not as displays of ingenuity in themselves. Even with his Opus 9 Sibelius had already indicated the stature which was to find its full growth many years later in the latter symphonies after many disheartening experiments and lapses into banality in lesser works.

Kajanu and Stokowski stood up so well to the first two symphonies and the *Swan* in their respective Columbia and Victor recordings that it is a distinct disappointment to find *En Saga* given shoddy treatment. Goossens gets the energy of the work and brings parts of it off quite well, but without getting far under its skin or for once forgetting himself in the music. The brass passages have the proper bite and the blazing passage for trumpets, mentioned above, is done superbly. But later the orchestral balance goes entirely to pieces (whether the fault be the conductor's or the recorder's), and for complete damnation Sibelius' is "corrected" by brutally cutting out some eighty bars (page 57, bar 9, to page 62, bar 7) which both he and the student of the score consider highly



Jan Sibelius

important, but which either Goossens or the H.M.V. recording director pronounced superfluous. The efficiency experts must have jumped for glee,—instead of going over on to a fourth record side, *En Saga* could be disposed of on three. A consultation of great minds was called to select a proper piece for the odd side left free by exacting the pound of flesh from the *Saga*. The choice was perfect: the *Valse Triste*, recorded for the dozenth time. . . .

It has been both a personal custom and a policy of the magazine to speak of such details with discretion. Knowing many of the difficulties both technical and of policy, that manufacturers and recording artists are up against, one should always hesitate to condemn before knowing the circumstances. In this instance there can be no palliation. The inferior recording of an important section of *En Saga* merits sharp criticism; but the issuance of the work in mutilated form is a piece of artistic barbarism. In the old days, when symphonic recording were first ventured upon, a cut version was to some extent better than none. At least it paved the way for complete works. Today there can be no excuse for excising standard works, least of all one that is not elsewhere recorded. It is unpleasantly surprising that a musician of Goossens' standing should allow his name to remain on this recording and that H.M. V. and Victor publish it. No indication is made that the work is in any way abridged; the ordinary hearer will take the disfigured version for the work as Sibelius wrote it. The work as issued is a discredit to recorded music and the phonograph.

R. D. D.

Help Wanted in Phono Research

Henry Cowell, the composer, has recently been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to investigate extra-European musical systems and is making a collection of authentic recorded music of oriental peoples. He is anxious to obtain copies of any recordings of American Indians, or native primitive music of any sort.

Ulysses J. Walsh, a frequent contributor to P. M. R. Correspondence Columns, is engaged on a history of the early days of the phonograph and is anxious to borrow record catalogue or monthly supplements issued before 1916.

Undoubtedly some of our readers can help these important labors in phonographic research. Mr. Cowell may be addressed at Menlo Park, California; Mr. Walsh at 346 Chestnut Street, Marion, Virginia.

A New "New World"

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, op. 95*, ("From the New World"), played by the STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by ERICH KLEIBER. BRUNSWICK Album Set No. 30 (5 D12s, Alb., \$7.50).

At this late date it would be absurd to raise any further question about the "New World" symphony. It is already too well known and its failings have been too hotly discussed for that. That another recording should have been made may seem to some perhaps unnecessary, but since it is here it will furnish an opportunity for any who do not already own it to procure it. The most striking characteristic of the set is its recording and in this it certainly surpasses all previous ones. The realism attained is not of the type which gives the impression that one is in the midst of the orchestra, but rather than one is advantageously situated in the concert hall. That is, the orchestra is not brought into one's room, but one is transported into its much larger room with consequent gain in acoustic perspective. The result of this, here splendidly embodied, is that the record is able to reproduce, more or less in miniature, all the gradations in power from a solo instrument, or a *pp*, to a *tutti fortissimo*. In the early electrical recordings, people were afraid to try this and either the conductor or the recording engineer kept the dynamic level approximately constant; or if such an experiment was attempted, the general effect was extremely thin, hollow and unnatural. Although more or less success in this direction has already been attained in a number of previous recordings, this shows it at its very best, and places every one under the obligation of hearing it, if for this reason alone. Realism of general effect is attained without any sacrifice of distinctness in the separate parts.

In regard to the reading itself, I must confess myself to have been much disappointed in Kleiber. After the careful restraint and balance of his reading of the Beethoven *Second* last month I was certainly not prepared for such over-emphasis and unnecessary emotionalism as he seems to me to be guilty of here. Rather than attempting to elevate it into a work of heroic or tragic proportions, one should, on the contrary, take advantage of every opportunity for jollity, lightness and humour. Kleiber's intensity quite ruins the spirit and effect of such places as bar 30 ff. of the "*poco sostenuto*" of the Scherzo, or the second theme of the Finale. The *Largo* can, after all, be only more or less sentimentalized, and Kleiber by his delicacy of phrasing takes a middle path here. Not every one may share my opinion as to the proper approach to the symphony however, and, as I have said, the recording at any rate entitles the set to consideration.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

Brahms Sonata No. 1

BRAHMS: *Sonata in G major, Op. 78*, for violin and piano, played by TOSCHA SEIDEL and ARTHUR LOESSER. COLUMBIA Masterworks Set No. 155 (4 D12s, Alb., \$6.00).

Columbia displays a peculiar predilection for Brahms' violin sonatas. The second was played by Seidel and Loesser among the first electrical album sets (Masterworks 36); the third appeared nearly a year ago in a performance by Zimbalist and Kaufman (Masterworks 140); and now the trio is made available in the Columbia catalogue by the release of the first recording of the sonata in G. This first sonata was written in 1879; the opus number lies between the violin concerto and the famous piano rhapsodies, Op. 79, in the near neighborhood of the *Academic Festival* overture and the second symphony. It was by no means Brahms' initial essay in the form: he had earlier written at least three violin sonatas, one of which was lost and the other two destroyed.

The final publication of a sonata obviously found Brahms in the full flush of his powers, and indeed the sonata is generally credited with heralding the mature powers of his later life. Standing at the end of one period on the threshold of another it pertakes something of the best qualities of each, yet perhaps more of the shortcomings of a transition work. It is highly popular and highly esteemed, yet comparing it with the third sonata I feel a lack of the sureness of grasp and the breadth of vision of the later work. Again, romantic and limpid as it is (Brahms wrote it in one of his most genial moods), one misses the fire, the steadfast cleaving to a single musical purpose that distinguished so many of

even Brahms' earliest works. It will remain popular, undoubtedly grow in popularity, but it is prettified Brahms, one of the works in which his incurably romantic nature got away from his usually firm intellectual grip. It has dangerously soft spots and time ripens music. The bitter cherries of the fourth symphony are pleasingly sweet to twentieth century taste; quite possibly the originally sugary sonata is overripe.

I wish I could find more to praise in the recorded performance, for it is a notable effort on Columbia's part to put out so important a trio of chamber works. There surely can be small enough financial profit in it. But temper one's criticism as one may, it is impossible to pass over the fact that while Seidel plays with some conviction, he plays with considerably more elegance, a quality hardly suited to strengthen the lack of backbone in the music itself. His tone is vibrant (often excessively so) and it is recorded unevenly and frequently with unpleasant nasal resonance. Loesser's performance is competent, but far, far too modest. Scarcely once does the piano speak out for itself instead of discreetly accompanying the violin's self-confident utterance. And the piano part is often extremely effective; already indicative of the splendid pianistic idiom of some of the later solo and ensemble works. The finale comes off most effectively and indeed it is the most interesting movement of the three. By exception it repeats one of Brahms' rare attempts at descriptive writing: melody and rippling accompaniment are lifted bodily from a pair of songs in Op. 59—*Regenlied* and *Nachklang*—although it must be confessed that the effect of rippling rain-drops provided by the piano is a highly innocuous bit of musical painting.

Those who warm to Brahms in his more frankly emotional moments will enjoy the sonata, nor will Seidel's highly expressive playing detract from their pleasure. But those who admire the sterner, grander, and infinitely more individual aspects of his art will turn to the third sonata with its far more noble grasp of life and its far sturdier and full-blooded performance by Zimbalist and Kaufman.

R. D. D.

A Third Gentleman

SCHAUSS: *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* suite for chamber orchestra, played by the VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA conducted by CLEMENS KRAUSS. Solo parts played by SCHULHOF (piano), MAIRECKER (violin) and BUXTBAUM ('cello). VICTOR Masterpiece Set M-101 (4 D12s, Alb., \$6.50).

It is evidently the vogue among the companies to compete with new versions of previously recorded Strauss. Hardly have we had an opportunity to judge the relative merits of a Gallic Gentilhomme, interpreted for Columbia by Straram and Teutonic Bürger conducted by the composer for Brunswick, when along comes another Gentilhomme—this time from Vienna under the guidance of the versatile Krauss, who not only rhymes with Strauss, but has succeeded him as director of the Vienna State Opera. Although there is probably much to be said for making numerous versions available, one could nevertheless wish that the next time a Strauss recording is contemplated, the Gentilhomme and Eulenspiegel be passed up for an opus not so extensively recorded.

Some space has been devoted in previous issues of the magazine to the history of the music and the music itself. In this clever and tuneful suite, Strauss aimed at simplicity and wisely confined the orchestration within the limits of chamber-music. Together with the Rosenkavalier it represents his nearest approach to a Mozartian ideal. The Viennese, whose recorded performances have been marked by clarity and precision, here surpass all previous efforts. It is accomplished playing and the soloists deserve the honor of being mentioned on the record label.

In this production Krauss reveals himself as an interesting interpreter, keen and sensitive and with a clear and comprehending grasp, and it is difficult to conjure up a more charming performance. The suite is complete on eight record sides and the pieces follow in the proper order, namely: Overture, Minuet, The Fencing Master, Entry and Dance of the Tailors, The Minuet of Lully, Courante, Entry of Cleonte (Music after Lully), Prelude to Scene 2, Intermezzo and the Dinner.

If you haven't already decided on a gentleman, it will be worth your while to lend an ear to this one. You have now at least three of these worthies to choose from and your particular prejudice must have the final say.

A. A. BIEWEND

Spanish Nights

DE FALLA: *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, suite for piano and orchestra, played by the ORQUESTA BETICA DE CAMARA OF SEVILLE, conducted by ERNESTO HALFFTER with MANUEL NAVARRO at the piano. COLUMBIA Masterworks Set No. 155. (3 D12s, Alb., \$4.50).

This makes the second appearance on records of this important modern composition. The first, conducted by Coppola for Victor was commented upon in considerable detail on page 280 of the May 1929 issue. The greatest advance of the present set over the earlier one lies in its improved recording. Every choir and instrument is here given its individuality, and realms of tonal colouring which one had not previously imagined are opened up. But after the novelty of this for one who has never heard the work in concert has worn off, one begins to find that the interpretation itself is disappointing. The first impression is that the mood is pitched in a lower and more sombre key, but soon it appears that this is the result of a striving after contrasts. Likewise, the general effect is hindered by a too great concern with details, which though doubtless of interest, should not be permitted to intrude to such an extent.

These defects are particularly noticeable in the first movement, which is extended to nearly three full sides. On the third of these some *pizzicati* which were quite new to me are very strikingly brought out, in fact they are accented almost too heavily. The succeeding climax seems decidedly inflated and at the same time dragged. The "Distant Dance" which commences near the end of the same part, starts off very well, giving a truly far off and rather mysterious effect, but the rest seems to lose itself and not to carry out its original promise. It is not helped any by the pianist who throughout is distinctly inferior to Mme. van Barentzen, both in rhythmic incisiveness and in a very special tone-quality demanded by the music. The transition to the last movement is placed at the end of part four. The conductor in this movement has extended opportunities to employ the heavy accents of which he seems so fond, but they are in part responsible for his missing to such an extent the proper feeling of a gradual steady flow and progression toward the climax, which the highest moment in the composition unfortunately fails to develop. In the important part here allotted to it, the piano further proves its inferiority.

Since, however, these disks come to us with the authentic seal of Spain, I may be mistaken in my criticism of the interpretation therein contained; perhaps, it is really the way de Falla himself conceived of the work. Halffter is a pupil of de Falla—which would bear out this assumption. In any case, this fact coupled with the accurate transmission accorded the performance, should tempt many to make a trial of it.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

The D'Oyly Carte Pinafore

GILBERT-SULLIVAN: *H. M. S. Pinafore*, Comis Opera in two acts, performed by the D' OYLY CARTE OPERA COMPANY. VICTOR Series C-13 (7 D12s, Alb., \$10.50).

Sir Joseph Porter	Henry A. Lytton
Captain Corcoran	George Baker
Ralph Rackstraw	Charles Goulding
Dick Deadeye	Darrell Fancourt
Josephine	Elsie Griffin
Little Buttercup	Bertha Lewis
Hebe	Nellie Briercliffe
Conductor MALCOLM SARGENT	

An unflagging stream of pathetic letters to the press indicates that there is a very considerable group in America who would gladly exchange the most sumptuously mounted Follies or Scandals for even a passable G. & S. revival. There is always a demand for undying music, but as Ames and many another have painfully discovered, the theatre and light opera stage today is one where even "angels" rightly fear to tread. In commenting on the release of a new addition to the already considerable recorded G. & S. series it is scarcely necessary to discant on the merits of the set for the benefit of those who are familiar with the earlier sets. One's object should be to animate these staunch converts to some general proselyting. Stage revivals of the Gilbert and Sullivan masterpieces are infrequent and in the near future they are likely to be highly rare. And even at their best they seldom measure up to the evenly rounded standard of performances by

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the D'Oyly Carte Company in London—the fountain-head of inexhaustible flow of this sparkling blend of genial humor, sentiment, and melody. The D'Oyly Carte Company records well. Unlike La Scala groups in Italian opera it is never guilty of routine performance before the microphone; on discs as well as on the stage its principals and chorus put the music across with a matchless combination of gusto and precision. Its sets are Gilbert and Sullivan to the life. If the writers of pathetic letters to the press will kindly lend an ear, they will save their energies and their money, eat and have their cake, for if they can't go to Gilbert and Sullivan, the incomparable twins will come to them.

The present *Pinafore* is technically and musically on a par with the *Pirates* and *Iolanthe* sets, both of which possessed greater finish than the still earlier *Mikado* album and the less important *Trial by Jury*. To those who have not heard the *Pirates* and *Iolanthe* records such ranking lacks force; what it means is that the principals are thoughtfully selected, both they and the chorus are not only steeped in the best G. & S. traditions but they are painstakingly trained; the conductor brings off the performance with immense spiritedness and despatch, and the recording is the finest the electrical process has yet accomplished with large ensembles. The score is practically complete. The dialogue is of course omitted, but the only portion of the music excised is the brief recitative, "O Bliss, O Rapture," (less than a page in the vocal score) just before the finale of Act 2, "O Joy, O Rapture."

Elsie Griffin's Josephine lacks something of the personality infused in the other roles, but her voice, albeit light, is pleasingly handled. Sir Henry Lytton's Sir Joseph Porter and George Baker's Captain are grand: the spirit, the humor, and the spontaneity are all there. Bertha Lewis (who according to news reports was recently killed in an automobile accident) gave one of her finest performances as the "dear little Buttercup," and Nellie Briercliffe does exceedingly well with her brief opportunities as Hebe, the leader of the acquiescent sisters and the cousins and the aunts. Yet Malcolm Sargent steals chief honors from the cast. His symphonic and concert recordings are seldom free from serious weaknesses, but in Sullivan's music he finds his true metier. The tempos are well chosen, the brisk pace and crisp incisiveness of the overture are maintained without a break throughout. The attacks throughout are clean; both instrumental and vocal tone qualities pleasing and well contrasted; the balance between orchestra and voices, and among the voices in the ensemble pieces is well kept. A first rate piece of direction, and one that might be held up as an example to more celebrated conductors of more pretentious operas.

For the benefit of the impecunious who would enjoy a snatch or two of this admirable *Pinafore* while they are saving for the complete set, I commend the first disc (9937) containing the overture and Buttercup's song; the third (9939) containing Josephine's air, "Sorry Her Lot," the all-too-brief girls' chorus "Over the Bright Blue Sea," the sailors' chorus and Sir Joseph's entrance and "I'm the Monarch of the Sea;" the fifth (9941) containing the finale to act I with its resume of the various principal airs and the especially happy staccato chorus "This Very Night"; and the sixth (9942) containing George Baker's song, "Fair Moon," and the animated duet "Things are Seldom What They Seem." But pick your own favorites. It's impossible to go wrong.

R. D. D.

The Rusticating Goldmark

KARL GOLDFMARK: *Ländliche Hochzeit (Rustic Wedding Symphony)*, an orchestral suite in symphonic form played by the VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA under the direction of ROBERT HEGER. VICTOR Masterpiece Set M-103 (6 D12s, Alb., \$7.50).

This release might aptly be termed an echo from the near past, as it was once much played and had fallen into comparative disuse of late years. It is, as the heading implies, in reality an orchestral suite which gathered together roughly resolves itself into the conventional symphonic movements without otherwise causing much strain on the approved sonata-form. It is gay, hearty music and frequent playings only serve to demonstrate the lusty spirit of many of the thematic ideas and their developments. Critics have had their usual divergence of opinion about the styles that the composer has so obviously incorporated into the symphony. To express it adequately would be to say that it is in the style of Beethoven, touched with Schubert, and half-way between Meyerbeer and Wagner. Anomaly though this may seem, it will not be difficult to pick out Schubertian flow of melody and the sumptuousness of the Meyerbeerian orchestra, if not the Beethoven grasp of the sonata-form and the unequalled Wagnerian sonorities.

The first movement is a Wedding march, which is the central theme, with a series of variations. The theme itself is stated by the 'cellos and basses in octaves. Variation 1, gives the melody to the first horn, accompanied by other horns and a moving bass in the strings. After the first 8 bars the clarinets and then the flutes are added and they in turn sing a fresh melody. Variation 2, brings the first entry of the violins and Variation 3 is scored for full orchestra. (The label is incorrect; side one also comprises the third variation.)

Variation 4, is in minor, the melody in the violins, later in the violas, with a florid accompaniment doubled by the second clarinet. Variation 5, is again in major, the theme in the basses reinforced by bassoons and horns. Variation 6, again gives the melody to the bass, the flutes and violins maintaining accompaniment. (These three variations form side 2). Variation 7, is humorous, with intricate part-writing and irregular accents, the eighth variation divides the violins and does not use the basses and bassoons, but doubles the strings and makes prominent use of the flutes, oboes and clarinets. Variation 9, has the theme suggested in the bass and an independent melody is imitated between the flutes and violins. Variation 10, is the theme indicated by basses and strings pizzicato and there are brilliant rapid figures for the violin throughout. (Side three ends here).

The eleventh variation introduces another independent melody, different from any previously heard, using the first violin and oboe, and then the clarinet and violin, with the melody later in the clarinet. Variation 12, in the key of B major, uses an entirely independent theme, a village folk-tune, first in the oboe, accentuated by the bassoons, with separate figures in the flutes and clarinets. There is also extensive use of two violins and a viola solo. The thirteenth—which on the record label is called a coda—is in the tempo of the original theme and is scored for full orchestra.

The second movement is the Bridal song. A solo oboe suggests a friendly bridesmaid (one of the chummy kind who may never be a bride herself), who steps forward with a feminine admonition to the bride. The march theme again occurs in the bass. The third movement is a serenade, equivalent in this instance to the scherzo. The slow movement following is titled, In the Garden, and suggests an intimate colloquy between the bride and groom. A new motive appears here after the melody of the movement has been announced in lower strings in syncopated chords.

The extremely brilliant finale, a village dance, is written in fugal form, violins leading then violas, 'cello, basses and later first violins, again. Various episodes recur, most important being that of the garden suggesting subtly enough that the happiness in the moonlight is not forgotten even in the swirling abandon of the dance.

The delightfully expert performance of the music enhances every one of its good points and certainly minimizes its weak ones. Vienna is indubitably the place to hear this music and it will be a pleasure for many to recapture in this music some of the ineffable joy and lightheartedness of this gayest, most brilliant of cities.

RICHARDSON BROWN

ORCHESTRA

SATIE: *Trois Petites Pièces Montées*, played by a SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by PIERRE CHAGNON, and QUINET: *Charade*, played by the TRIO OF THE COURT OF BELGIUM (Dubois, Dambois, Bosquet). COLUMBIA 50292-D (D12, \$1.25).

Columbia gives us a delightful surprise. One had hardly expected this comparatively unknown Satie recording to be released in this country. To find it not only out, but now happily divorced from the Massenet trifle that adorned the reverse side and mated to a novelty, is a heartening indication of progressive and considered thought. There is all too little of Satie on discs. Mr. Blackmur discussed the main items in his review, "Three Men in a Tub," in the July 1930, P.M.R.; "Satie was a comic in chords and a wit in scales: some of his music brings up a burden of self-applause and then, suddenly, crackles, with self-mockery which is at once the destruction and the bitter apotheosis of the subject in the music. Here we have the *Trois Pièce Montées*, the snickering, the grossly snickering ballet bits from Rabelais. (The first, by the way, represents *L'Enfance de Pantagruel*; the second, *Marche de Cocagne*; and the third, *Jeunesse de Gargantua*.) It is not Rabelais, it is Satie thinking of Rabelais *in petto*, done with care, with delicacy, with malice; it is a little Rabelais, which exposes Rabelais."

Quinet is a new name; I am unable to find it in any of the available reference books. His *Charade* consists of several brief pieces. I presume the work as a whole is a genuine charade and that its meaning is to be guessed from the various episodic pieces. If so, the solution is not apparent to me. Perhaps someone greater familiarity with the music can provide a clue. As music it is scarcely significant, bearing some resemblances, except for its harmonic idiom, to the "suspense," "chase," and "storm" music of the old-time movie pianist. The Belgian Trio plays neatly, but the piano tone records with more glitter than sonority. At any rate the disc is important by virtue of the Satie pieces; interesting by the Quinet. R.D.D.

DEBUSSY: *Nocturnes*—No. 1, *Nuages*; No. 2, *Fêtes*, (two sides each), played by the ORCHESTRE DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS LAMOUREUX, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90158-9, (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

This is the sort of music in which one would prognosticate a triumph for Wolff and he achieves it. It is unfortunate however, that the opportunity should not have been taken to give also those "Sirènes," which were it not for the existing of a recording by Gabriel Pierné, one would believe existed only in print.

In the purposely amorphous and continually changing "Nuages" one must, paradoxically enough, admire especially the precision and care with which each phrase as it appears in the various instruments is treated. The conductor's happy treatment of wood-winds is known and here he is given full scope. The result, aided by a lucid and carefully balanced recording, is an exact rendering of the desired impressionistic picture.

The record of "Fêtes" is in every way a masterpiece. Wolff is evidently determined from the outset to draw from it the utmost in glittering brilliance and by his vivacious *tempo* and sharp accents, he certainly attains a glowing effect. In awarding credit, however, the electrifying playing of the orchestra and still more, the rich and exciting realism of the recording must certainly not be forgotten. From all these standpoints the two discs may be ranked among Wolff's most successful, and, considering the music, most popular releases.

CHABRIER: *Marche Jayeuse*, and *Le Roi Malgré lui—Danse Slave*, played by the VICTOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by ROSARIO BOURDON. VICTOR 36037, (D12, \$1.25).

These two pieces are played in a manner which is best described by the words "flashy" and "slick." The cheap nature of the music itself and the obvious and startling showiness of the recording all combine to give the record a very definite, and I should imagine, restricted appeal. The March is decidedly superior to the "Danse slave" and possesses a certain interest because of its ingenious instrumentation, but it requires a performance which shall try to cover up rather than to emphasize its cheapness. One can find in it all the orchestral and rhythmic tricks which go to make up the appeal of *Espana* without its sheer irresistibleness.

BRAHMS: *Academic Festival Overture*, op. 80, (3 sides), played by the PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by JULIUS PRUEWER, and BERLIOZ: *The Damnation of Faust—Rákoczy March*, played by the ORCHESTRE DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS LAMOUREUX, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90155-6. (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

Just when we thought that we had the various *Academic Festival Overtures* classified, along comes this one which its merits will not permit one to neglect. Prüwer has always been a great favorite of mine and from his impressive readings of his other more or less hackneyed works, I was prepared for something unusual in this instance also. Although not so remarkable as his celebrated *Egmont*, it nevertheless increases the difficulty of a choice. The nature of the reading can, I think, best be conveyed by a reference to the two versions of Mengelberg and Stiedry reviewed in the last issue. Prüwer combines many of the advantages of both. For those for whom the Stiedry record was too much lacking in dignity and orchestral brilliance, but who, on the other hand, desired more light-hearted vigour than was provided by Mengelberg, this will prove an ideal compromise. While no one could accuse Prüwer of lack of vivacity, he at the same time places sufficient emphasis on the more serious moments in the music, so that either extremist, as well as those wishing an in between reading, is likely to be satisfied. A further factor of importance is the excellent recording. Although the extended *pizzicatti* in the 'cellos are not quite as clear as they might be, this lack of emphasis is more than atoned for by the wood winds and above all by the justly renowned brasses, which are reproduced with the greatest splendour. This fact coupled with the extreme breadth with which Prüwer takes the closing peroration makes it a thrilling moment.

Mention of the "March" might better be made with the following record, including two more selections from the same work.

BERLIOZ: *The Damnation of Faust*, op. 24,—*Minuet of the Will-o'-the-Wisps* and *Dance of the Sylphs*, played by the ORCHESTRE DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS LAMOUREUX, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90157. (D12, \$1.50).

The "March," which is included on the fourth side of the *Academic Festival Overture*, is performed with the most extreme fervour and demoniac energy, but in spite of this and of a really phenomenal reproduction of the orchestral tumult, the effect of it all is to me at least, surely much less impressive and thrilling than it must once have been. Perhaps we have been spoiled by modern developments in the same direction. It is otherwise with the "Minuet" and more especially with the "Dance of the Sylphs," however. In the former, which extends to the second side, the chief interest is in the varied and piquant orchestration, and here, as might be expected, Wolff knows how to get the best effect. It is in the lace-like "Danse des Sylphes," however, that the greatest marvel lies. Its sinuous motion and tenuous delicacy are magically captured. As we approach the end, the flutes seem scarcely to whisper, and the strings drop away until only one or two solo are left, and yet all remains beautifully distinct.

KELER-BELA: *Lustspiel Overture*, played by the BERLIN STATE ORCHESTRA, conducted by CLEMENS SCHMALSTICH. VICTOR (German list) V-69. (D10, 75c).

Albert von Keler (1820-82) an Hungarian contemporary of Strauss and Lanner (whose orchestra he took over after his death) is probably less known by name than it this oft-heard overture. If one had not heard it so often, he might very well find its alternating march and waltz rhythms very pleasant. If there be such they will no doubt enjoy it as much as do the conductor and band.

BOIELDIEU: *The Caliph of Bagdad—Overture*; played by DR. WEISSMANN and a SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. COLUMBIA G-50293-D (D12, \$1.25).

The overture to this, the most important work of Boieldieu's first style, is very slight material, but when played in such a sympathetic manner it can still be very agreeable. Dr. Weissmann wisely does not attempt to startle it into life by an excess of vigour, as he sometimes does.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

Seen also the detailed reviews of Sibelius' "En Saga" (page 268), Dvorak's "New World" Symphony (page 269), Strauss' "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" suite (page 269), De Falla's "Nights in the Gardens of Spain" (page 270), and Goldmark's "Rustic Wedding" Symphony (page 271).

INSTRUMENTAL

Piano

IBERT: *Le Petit Ane Blanc*; MACDOWELL: *Czardas*; and GLAZOUNOW: *Gavotte in D*, played by IGNACE HILSBERG. BRUNSWICK 6103 (D10, 75c).

A Hilsberg disc is always to be anticipated for its unconventional choice of material, its discreetly competent playing, and its abundance of fascinating musical fare for a very small cost. Like all good things they are rare; this is the first for several months, but it is worth waiting for. The Ibert piece has been recorded several times in Europe, but the others are here set on wax for the first time. The Gavotte is one of the most pleasing of Glazounow's smaller works, a cheerful little piece, deftly constructed, and played here with a nice rhythmical feeling and the proper restrained spirit. Ibert's Little White Donkey is an amusing little creature that kicks up its pretty heels nervously, raises a little harmonic dust, and makes off at a sedate trot. The Czardas is out from the same cloth as the Hexentanz, but comes on records as a welcome relief from that much overworked war-horse. It is interesting to compare Hilsberg's technique in the cool, detached, rapid notes of the vivacious Ibert piece, with that in fluent passage work of the MacDowell. I should like to hear him play more modern works—Bartok, for instance, whom he should do extremely well.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12*, played by IRENE SCHARER. COLUMBIA 50291-D (D12, \$1.25).

It is unfortunate to restrict Miss Sharer's American releases to music of the Lisztian vintage exclusively. Her Mozart and Scarlatti would be infinitely preferable. Granting the music, however, she plays with proper virtuosity and considerably more taste and lyrical feeling than most of her contemporaries who venture into the field of the older pianistic generation. Yet conviction is lacking, as it must be. This is music of another day, and its emptiness and grandiloquence are painfully apparent to 1931 ears.

MENDELSSOHN: *Spring Song*, and JENSEN (arr. NIEMANN): *Murmuring Zephyrs*, played by RUDOLPH GANZ. VICTOR 1508 (D10, \$1.50).

Ganz also chooses music more than a little old-fashioned. Niemann's transcription of the familiar Jenson song is glibly enough tossed off, but both in it and the perennial Spring Song Ganz scarcely needs to further sugar the sentimentality. Such discs have their place, but it is not in the van of the phonograph movement.

Violin

BACH (arr. SILOTI): *Adagio*, and PERGOLESI (arr. FACHIRI): *Arietta*, played by YELLY D'ARANYI, with piano accompaniments by ARTHUR BERGH. COLUMBIA 2443-D (D10, 75c).

The Bach Adagio has already been made familiar by the incomparable performance by Casals. I believe it has also been recorded by Tertia in his own arrangement for viola. Miss D'Aranyi's thin violin tone, sensitive as it is, hardly becomes the eloquent melody as well as Casals' 'cello, and she plays it with something less of the proper response and broad flow. If I remember rightly the Arietta is none other than the popular "Nina." Is so the inaccurate attribution to Pergolesi is perpetuated on another record label. Grove tells us that not only is the air not Pergolesi's, but it was originally written for a comic opera, and the contemplative, melancholy style in which it is invariably played is as erroneous as the authorship. Apart from all this, Miss D'Aranyi plays the piece effectively enough in the conventional manner.

Cello

RAVEL: *Pièce en forme de Habanera*, and FAURE (arr. CASALS): *Après un Rêve*, played by MAURICE MARÉCHAL, with piano accompaniments. COLUMBIA 2446-D (D10, 75c).

Every disc Maréchal turns out bears the imprint of his consistent musicianship and personality. Even in these brief pieces he reinforces the impression gained from his larger works that he is a 'cellist of vivid and yet well rounded attainments. Casals' transcription of the popular Faure song is sung simply and with gracious tone qualities. The Ravel miniature, small as it is, reveals something of his more varied range of powers, but he keeps the performance well restrained. (The piece is one of Ravel's earliest; it served later as the basis of the Habanera movement of the Spanish Rhapsody). The disc is very pleasingly recorded. O. C. O.

OPERATIC

MOZART: *Die Zauberflöte*—*Bei Maennern welche Liebe fühlen*, and *Don Giovanni*—*Reich mir die Hand* ("*Là ci darem la mano*"), sung in German by ELISABETH VAN ENDERT and GERHARD PECHNER, with the BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA. VICTOR (German list) V-56060. (D12, \$1.25).

Although these two duets are frequently heard (the one from the *Zauberflöte* is, of course, "La dove prende" in the Italian version, they are so delightful that an inexpensive and artistic coupling is to be welcomed. In contrast to the renderings by Italians to which one is more accustomed, this aims less at smoothness and finish, than at a slower and more romantic interpretation. One probably unintentional result of this is that the music is made to appear a trifle jerky in places. Although there is much to be said for this more German view, especially in the case of *Die Zauberflöte*, it nevertheless involves the sacrifice of something which I had regarded as typically Mozartean. The vocal competence of the two singers is already known, and, while they are not performers of the highest calibre, their rendering is here very good. The orchestra also is nicely balanced.

R. H. S. P.

HANDEL: *Xerxes*—*Largo*, and *Cantat con stromenti*—*Aria*, "*Dank*" *Sei Dir, Herr*," sung by EMMI LEISNER, the first sung in Italian with orchestral accompaniment, the second in German with organ and orchestral accompaniment. BRUNSWICK 90160 (D12 \$1.50).

I have the feeling that Handel would have been amused if he could know that the aria which he placed in the mouth of a slightly intoxicated old Persian monarch to praise the shelter of a plane tree after sampling gustatory delights with rather too much enthusiasm would have become the most widely known religious air of all time, a favorite with every contralto worthy of the name, as well as for assorted voices of all varieties and qualities.

The reverse side is another of the noble melodies which Handel above all others seemed to be able to write, and one which has escaped the too great popularity of the *Largo*. Madame Leisner sings them both with fine authority and breadth of style while her voice seems to have deepened and grown richer. Perhaps it is the recording which has so notably improved in so many of the foreign releases. It will be interesting to compare this record with that of Madame Schumann-Heink for this month and decide which you prefer, a fresh young voice lacking some of the tradition and background which go to make up the grand manner or the grand manner in its truest manifestation with the voice itself less than it once was.

FAUST—*Salut Demeure*, and CARMEN—*Flower Song* sung in French by GIACOMO LAURI VOLPI with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 7389 (D12, \$2.00).

These selections are the answer to the phonophiles' prayer for some unhaunched numbers. I am very much afraid that I am one who will never be convinced that the sale of a record like this would be greater than the same artist's rendition of something that hasn't been sung to death. The European lists prove that such a public exists and certainly the American response must be somewhat similar because we have had much cause for gratitude in recent months.

These numbers are sung in the tenor's restrained style which he has used to much advantage in several Metropolitan appearances. I should not, however, consider him in his best voice or mood at the making of these releases but they are well above the general run at that, and what one's appetite for more along similar lines (vocally, of course).

DONIZETTI: *Favorita*—*Spirto gentil*, and Bizet: *Pescatori di Perle*—*Mi par d'udir ancora*. COLUMBIA 50290-D (D12, \$1.25).

THOMAS: MIGNON—*Ah, non cedevi tu* and *Addio, Mignon*. COLUMBIA 2447-D (D10, 75c), all sung in Italian by TOMMASO ALCAIDE.

Signor Alcaide is possessed of a tenor voice of uncommon beauty, one which he uses with excellent if not rare, effectiveness. He does not make the common mistake of present-day tenors by attempting to emulate the late Caruso and thereby forcing his voice out of quality and resonance. The numbers themselves are scarcely new but they wear better than many others and are well worth the re-hearing, although it is doubtful if they make as wide an appeal to record lovers as many other arias which could be so easily recorded. R.B.

SONGS

SCHUMANN: *Es zogen zwei rut'ge gesellen*, and HUMPERDINCK—*Am Rhein*, sung in German by HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS with piano accompaniments by FRANZ RUPP. BRUNSWICK 85003 (D10, \$1.25).

Those who have heard former releases by this great baritone will need no hint that all his recordings should be purchased with as little delay as possible. The Schumann song is typical of the fine vocal line and brilliant pianistic background of the composer's work and it is interesting to hear Humperdinck in the role of song writer, a field in which judging from this song he might well have become distinguished. What a pity the Metropolitan failed to revive *Königskinder* at Miss Farrar's request so that the opera goers of the present day might have the memory of that incomparably beautiful performance which will live forever in the minds of those who were privileged to witness it!

MENDELSSOHN: *St. Paul*—*For the Lord is Mindful of His Own*, and BACH: *My Heart Ever Faithful*, sung by ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK with orchestral accompaniment. VICTOR (Educational list) 7388 (D12, \$2.00).

Once more the great contralto demonstrates her right for her position among the immortals. The splendid breath of phrasing, the superb attack and the whole-hearted beauty of her song in these famous excerpts command the highest praise. Time has brought occasional shortness of breath, and subsequent loss of quality, but they are much less apparent here than in recent releases in a more popular vein and comparison with the record just mentioned shows how difficult it is to find any other singer in this day and age who can encompass the glories of a Titan like Madame Schumann-Heink. Those who love her will prefer to remember her in this vein rather than in recently cruelly disillusioning radio performances and coast-to-coast gaddings with itinerant impresarios, who like to trade on this very quality which all but vanishes as a consequence.

Private Lives

NOEL COWARD: Two Scenes from "Private Lives"—Dialogue and singing—by GERTRUDE LAWRENCE and NOEL COWARD, with Mr. Coward at the piano. VICTOR 36034 (D12, \$1.25).

Mr. Coward is truly one of the nine wonders of the world. He is a playwright of uncommon skill; his music has melody and is often satirically twisted, he is an actor of parts, both tragic and deftly comic; he sings with great charm and effectiveness, and he seems to have the knack of getting others to reflect these same abilities. Miss Lawrence has always been one of the chief ornaments of the English and American stages and she has done her very best work in "Private Lives." Both the protagonists have the art of exquisite insincerity at their finger-tips and the present recording catches this feeling to perfection. Songs are interspersed skillfully through the dialogue affording the requisite contrast. Since the contract for the two artists' appearances in the New York presentation of the play has expired this recording will form the sole means for hearing the delightful performance of these two celebrities.

R. B.

Band

VOELKER-LAKE: *A Hunt in the Black Forest*, and ORTH: *In a Clock Store*, played by the BAND OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE conducted by FLIGHT LT. J. H. AMERS. COLUMBIA 2442-D (D10, 75c).

Such "descriptive novelties" as these bear about as much relation to music as the old fashioned music boxes, while lacking the latter's charm. The performances here are routine, strongly and coarsely recorded, by no means as effective as the more pretentious concert orchestral versions. I miss the dogs in the hunt. The hunting horns and the "'eavy, 'eavy 'ammer of the 'osses' 'ooves'" are there, but not the eager or triumphant chorus of the hunting pack. And what's a hunt without dogs?

POPULAR

Warblers

THE lists are brief and undistinguished. *Ruth Etting* wins largely by default. Her *Falling in Love Again* and *Were You Sincere?* (Columbia 2445-D) are highly lachrymose. Out of Nowhere and *Say a Little Prayer* (2454-D) are likewise bland and plaintive but are injected with rather more personality. *Johnny Marvin* also contributes two discs, Victor 22666 and 22649, colorless ditties about sweethearts of the mountains and prairies. *Nick Lucas* and *Bing Crosby* appear for Brunswick, the former in a fair *Wabash Moon* and *I Surrender* (6089), and the latter in routine versions of *Out of Nowhere* and *If You Should Ever Need Me* (6090). Finally there is the super-saccharine *Art Gilham* on Columbia 2451-D.

DANCE

Wonder Bar

LAST month I spoke a little too soon when I said that none of the American versions of the "Wonder Bar" hits could compare with the earlier German recordings. *Waring's Pennsylvanians* come along to belie me with the gayest and most workmanlike performances of *Oh Donna Clara* and *Elizabeth* yet set on wax. The vocal work in the latter piece especially is worthy of one's devoted attention (Victor 22655).

Cuban Stuff

That indefatigable ferret, W. Winchell, is authority for the fact that *Leo Reisman* has privately recorded his own fox trot arrangement of the Boléro. No copy has come to my ears but I can imagine that Leo does exceedingly well with the Ravel tid-bit. Rumor had him highly disappointed when Shilkret's version was chosen for release by Victor. *Vincent Lopez* returns with a rumba of his own, *Muchada*, coupled with the peppery and popular *Mama Inez* (Brunswick 6084), but both lack something in rhythmic animation if not in color. More authentic is *Don Azpiazu's Havana Casino* orchestra in *The Voodoo* and *African Lament*, although here the tone colors are open to ready criticism. The arrangements however are ingenious, and the *Lament* boasts a fine slow haunting tune (Victor 22657).

Outstanding

Ted Weems keeps his fine record clean with a very chipper and amusing performance of *My Favorite Band* (in the best tradition of *Piccolo Pete*, *One Man Band*, etc.); and a coupling of *Egyptian-Ella*, done in the jauntiest possible style, and a fetching tune ornamented with much fiddle work, *Jig-Time* (Victor 22644). The vocal choruses throughout are exceptionally good. *Wayne King* provides the couple to the first Weems piece mentioned *Star Dust*—an attractive piece played with a musicianlike ear for tone, rhythm, and phrasing (Victor 22656). On 22648 King and Weems again have opposite sides, playing respectively *I Keep Remembering* and *Blossom of Buttercup Lane*, with honors going to the fine animation and pleasing orchestral tune of the former.

The Brunswick winners are good old *Isham Jones* back on the job with a vivacious Good-Night and a less effective *Bidding My Buddy Good-Bye* (6096); *Earl Burtneff* turning in the most amusing record of the month: *Sing Another Chorus* and *She Went Havana*, both lustily swinging tunes mated to words that are genuinely humorous and effectively delivered, (the disillusioned tone of *Sing Another Chorus* is particularly rare on dance discs;—altogether a record quite unusual—6101). *Abe Lyman* does very vigorous but rather noisy versions of *Road to Calais* and *What Have We Got to Do* (6094). *How I Miss You* and *To Whisper Dear* (6095)—the last-named piece comes off more smoothly than the rest without lacking anything of their animation.

Columbia is best represented by *Ted Lewis' One More Time*, featuring some exceedingly deft playing and a vocal chorus that is much peppier than Ted usually manages to be. The coupling is *Ho Hum*, curiously old-fashioned in treatment and adorned with a typical Ted chorus (2452-D). *Teddy Raph* makes his debut with two well equipped discs, the better of which is 2440-D, with *Please Don't Talk About Me* and *Taking My Sugar to Tea*; 2450-D offers *Dream a Little Dream and Everything That's Nice*.

The Field

Clyde McCoy makes not a bad bid for poetic honors in *Lonely Gondolier*, but just falls short; the coupling is a well contrasted peppy but shrill *Looks Like Love* (Columbia 2453-D). *Guy Lombardo* offers some dapper playing in *Whistling in the Dark* and *Building a Home* (2444-D), but Carmen's choruses set a new lachrymose high, I miss the vivacity that featured his singing in the days of "Baby!" and some of the other best Lombardo discs. *Ben Selvin* cultivates the *Kiddies Hour* with a miniature martial *Soldier on the Shelf* with a very slow and sentimental version of *Two Hearts* (2438-D); *Ted Wallace* plays blithe but conventional versions of *Mary Jane* and *Lazy Country Lane* (2441-D).

For Okeh the *Golden Terrace Orchestra* proffers a jaunty *Ho Hum* and a dull *Little Old Church* (41496). For Brunswick *Nick Lucas* does a suave piece of work with *Let's Get Friendly* and *I've Got it Bad* (6098); the *Brunswick Salon Orchestra* plays incredibly pretentious and ultra-songful arrangements of *Song of Songs and Trees* (6102); and *Ben Bernie* does neat but undistinguished playing in *Whistling in the Dark* and *Little Boy of Mine* (6097). Victor: *Bert Lown* is always to be heard for his fine tone qualities, but the present batch of his pieces is distinguished by little else: *Were You Sincere* and *I've Found What I Wanted* (22653), *Running Between the Rain-Drops and Take My Sugar to Tea* (22654). *Henry Busse* does better with fine mellow, highly danceable versions of *I Surrender* and *Thrill Me* (22658); *Leo Reisman* is ultra-bland in highly songful performances of *Out of Nowhere* and *Yours is My Heart Alone* (22668); the *London Mayfair Orchestra* demonstrates that not only American bands are guilty of sloppy sentimentality; its suave *Say a Little Prayer* is typical of a thousand domestic discs of its type, such as its present coupling, the *Troubadours' Mine Yesterday His Today* (22667).

HOT JAZZ

Minnie Again

THE Moocher is back again this month in two new versions, by the *Five Rhythm Kings* for Victor and by *King Carter* for Columbia. The Kings are a small band without much thought to tone quality, but they scratch out an amusing version, doing rather better however in *Please Don't Talk About Me*, played in very catchy style (3269). King Carter comes through with the best performance and arrangements of the song yet. His men make the most of the unforgettable antiphonal chorus, and the band's pianist provides a very clever background. Carter also scores an ace with the coupling, *Left With the Blues in My Soul*, again the chorus commands praise, and the playing is torrid without detracting from admirable tonal qualities. (Columbia 2439-D—a hot disc to be starred.)

Darker Hues

For once Louis and the Duke have to take a back seat in the Hot Hall of Fame. *Blanche Calloway* consolidates her grip on the first medal with a marvellous coupling of *Just a Crazy Song* and *Sugar Blues* (Victor 22661). The Blues display some erratic wa-wa trumpeting, but the Hi-Hi-Hi song is a knockout, easily the best of the several fine recordings, and containing a couple of choruses of decidedly roguish implications. Blanche is heard also on 22659, *Loveless Love* and *Getting Myself Ready for You*. The latter is neatly done, and the Handy piece contains some unusual moments, but the effect is not up to the *Crazy Song* or *Casey Jones* of earlier release. *Jimmy Johnson's orchestra* also Tackles the *Crazy Song* to good effect. Here the pace is much slower and the interpretation quite different, but the chorussing is no less effective in its own way (Columbia 2448-D). The coupling is an interesting *Go Harlem*, featuring a good chorus and some characteristic Johnsonian pianism.

Ellington comes next, first with a re-issue of his adept performance of the Gershwin's *Sam and Delila*, coupled with the *Bluejeans'* ingeniously vocalized *Bidin' My Time* (Victor 23036), and for Brunswick (alias the *Jungle Band*) with an original two-part *Creole Rhapsody*, which is good—notably by virtue of the Duke's own work on the keyboard—but not in the finest Ellington tradition (Brunswick 6093). *Louis Armstrong* rests on his laurels a bit, putting little of his best

stuff into I Surrender and Walkin' My Baby Back Home, although the former has a touch of his individual pathos, and the latter is done in easy, jaunty style.

The remaining hot discs include Victor 22660, New Kinda Blues in an interesting arrangement by Paul Howard's Serenaders doing some entrancing quiet wa-wa work, and *Bennie Moten's* restrained version of As Long as I Love You; and 22662, Crazy 'Bout My Baby and Smile, Darnya, Smile by *Snooq* and his Memphis Stompers;—fair routine work. Also Columbia 14599-D, the *New Orleans Wild Cats* in a furious, coarse Wild Cats on Parade, and a more neatly turned Harlem Baby; and 2449-D, Comin' and Goin' and Hot and Anxious in fair to middling performances by the *Baltimore Bell Hops*.

White Hot

The *Casa Loma* band, long one of Okeh's star organizations, now appears for the first time under a Brunswick label, turning in characteristic work in a breakneck paced White Jazz and a deft and spirited reading of Waller's I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby (6092), the best of the dance versions and inferior only to Waller's imitable own pianoing. *Wayne King* enters the hot lists, after forging to the front of the ballroom dance lists in the last few months, and does a pretty piece of playing in *Gooftus* and *Chloe* (Victor 22600); the former contains some exhilarating jiggly fiddle work, and the latter is an interesting experiment to duplicate the best qualities of *Chloe*.

TONFILM HITS

Robert Stolz hits

THE inevitable *Zwei Herzen* is out again in a highly stolid version by *Jahrl's Novelty Quintet*, coupled with a very slightly more vivacious *Auch Du* from the same film (Columbia 12146-F). The latter is a grand tune, deserving better treatment, as indeed it received from the *Dobbri* orchestra in last month's Columbia lists. This latter orchestra now plays *Adieu mein kleiner Gardeoffizier* from *Stolz's* "Das Lied ist aus" (coupled with *Mein Schatz ist ein Matrose*, on Columbia G-5222-F); and *Marek Weber* plays the same march-song, plus *Wenn das Wörtchen* "Wenn' night wär" from the same film (Victor V-6119). Both do well with the march-song; *Weber's* version is more brilliant and better contrasted, but the *Dobbri* disc has the better vocal chorus. The "If" song, done so catchily by *Dajos Bela* last month, is equalled by the no less bright and danceable performance of *Weber*. The *Dobbri* *Matrose* song is likewise infectiously jaunty, rich in jazz and brilliant effects, (note the piano), giving both discs starred rating.

Wien du Stadt der Lieder

Hans May's music to "Wen du Stadt der Lieder" is represented by the title song and *Ja, dort im Liebhardstal*, sung by *Erik Wir* on Victor V-6120, and *Ohne dich kann ich nicht leben* and *Ich hab' kein Auto, ich hab' kein Rittergut*, the former sung by *Siegfried Arno* and the latter played by *Marek Weber* with *Austin Egen* singing the chorus (Victor V-6118). *Wirl* sings dulcet, somewhat pretentious versions of his melodious hits to sauve accompaniments conducted by *Clemens Schmalstich*. *Arno* contrives to get vastly more personality into *Ohne Dich* (curiously reminiscent of the wartime K-K-K-Katy), but *Marek Weber's* side is the best of the four, a gloriously vivacious performance of a rousing tune adorned by *Egen's* invariably effective singing.

Ein Burschenlied aus Heidelberg

May is also the composer of the music for this UFA-film. The title song and *Komm herunter Roselinde* are done by the *Dobbri* orchestra (Columbia G-5227-F), in good sturdy fashion for the march and sauvre style for the tango. A male quartet sings characteristically Teutonic chorusses.

Ein Madel von der Reeperbahn

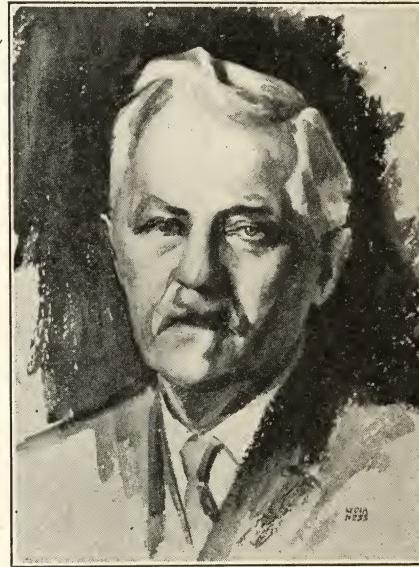
The *Columbia Tanz-Orchester* plays *Mach' Licht* and *Du bist für mich das Märchen einer Nacht* (Columbia 522-3F) with a good swing, featuring a very realistically recorded vocal chorus and some brilliant accordion work in the former piece. The latter boasts some good sonority and an even more attractive tune.

Miscellaneous

Dajos Bela plays the title song from "Du Blonde Wirtin vom Rhein" (Columbia G-5204-F) in good rousing fashion (instead this exactly the same performance pressed on Columbia G-5225-F last month?). The coupling this time is *Im Rolandsbogen* sung by *Hans Clemens* in pretentious, big-voiced fashion. Likewise so-so is the coupling of "Wunderbar" hits in brisk accordion versions by *George Sellers* (Victor V-70).

Outside the Tonfilm grouping there is various German jazz played by the *Sonora Band* (Du hast do blaue Augen wie die blaue Adria—Columbia 5207-F), *Marek Weber* (O Fräulein Grete and Schenk' mir eine Tafel Schokolade—Victor V-6114), and *Dajos Bela* (Bein Fräulein Lisbeth im Parterre and O Cara Mia—Columbia G-5228-F; Im Rosengarten von Sanssouci and Brauchest du nicht eien Freund?—Columbia G-5206-F; Der weise Marabu and Susie bläst das Saxophon—Columbia G-5208-F). The sonora number is very peppily but roughly played; *Weber's* performances and material are decidedly routine; *Dajos Bela* on the contrary provides a well balanced group of tuneful pieces well delivered. Exception should be made in the case of *Im Rosengarten* with its elaborate chimes, bird-twitters, and unfelicitous "effects."

THE SAXOPHONE'S AMERICAN DEBUT



Eustach Strasser

THE saxophone's intriguing of the American public was begun as early as the Nineties, by none other than the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the conductorship of the ascetic Artur Nikisch. The recently issued history of the Boston Symphony (reviewed on page 279 of this issue) ignores the episodes, but it is entitled to mention as something of a historical landmark.

When Mr. Nikisch conducted Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* suite on January 5, 1893, the strange voice of the saxophone sounded for the first time in public in America. The late Eustach Strasser, then clarinet soloist of the orchestra and highly esteemed by Gericke and Nikisch as a virtuoso on that instrument, was the saxophonist for the occasion. Nikisch had insisted that the alto saxophone specified in Bizet's score must be used. None was to be had from any of the American musical supply houses. An order was sent to Paris, but when the instrument arrived, it was found to be unplayable, apparently damaged in transit. There was no time to get another. But nothing daunted, Mr. Strasser, who had developed a considerable knack for his own clarinet repairs, volunteered to put the saxophone to rights. He not only did so, but mastered the strange instrument in time for the concert, in which his saxophone passages were singled out as high lights by the critics.

New European Releases

Orchestral

Aubert: Dryade, Aubert—Paris Conservatory orch. (Decca)
 Bach: Concerto for Two Violins, Alma and Arnold Rose (H. M. V.)
 Beethoven: Leonore Overt. No. 3, Mengelberg—Concertgebouw (Col.)
 Chopin: Piano Concerto in E minor, Rosenthal and Berlin S. O. H. (Parlophone)
 De Falla: El amor brujo, Halfter—Orch. Betica de Camara (Sp. Col.)
 Dvorak: Slavonic Dances 1 and 3, Sargent—Royal Opera orch. (H. M. V.)
 Franck: Redemption (and Psyché enlevée) Coppola—Paris Conservatory (Fr. H. M. V.)
 Franck: Symphony D minor, Rhené-Baton—Pasdeloup orch. (Decca)
 German: Welsh Rhapsody, Ronald—London Sym. (H. M. V.)
 Haydn: Overture in D, and Weber: Abu Hassan overt., Heger—Vienna Philharmonic (H. M. V.)
 Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1, Coates—London Sym. (H. M. V.)
 Lothe: Lord Spleen—Overt., Serenade, Fugue, etc., Schmalstich—Berlin Sym. (H. M. V.)
 Pick-Mangiagalli: Danza di Olaf, and Casella: Convent sur l'eau—Pas de vieilles dames and Rondo d'enfants.
 Rabaud: Marouf—Dances, Coppola—Paris Conservatory (Fr. H. M. V.)
 Ravel: La Valse, Wolff—Lamoureux orch. (Brunswick-Polydor)
 Rossini: La Gazza Ladra—Overt., Furtwängler—Berlin Philharmonic (Brunswick-Polydor)
 Samper, Baltasar: Cançons i Danses de l'Illa de Mallorca. Coibert-Camins (pianist) with the Barcelona orch. (Regal)
 Wagner: Siegfried Idyll, Bruno Walter (Col.)
 Wagner: Siegfried's Funeral Music, Kleiber—Berlin Philharmonic (Ultradisc)
 Warlock: Capriol Suite, Bernard—London Chamber Orch. (Decca)

Chamber Music

Beethoven: Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4, Rose Quartet (H. M. V.)
 Franck: Violin Sonata, Alfred Dubois—Marcel Maas (Belgian Col.)
 Berlioz: Trio de jeunes Ishmaelites, Laskine-Moyse-Manouvrier (Decca)

Piano

Aubert: Air de Ballet, and Saint-Saëns: Etude Op. III, No. 5, M. & Mme. de Lausnay (Decca)
 Beethoven: A Flat Sonata, Op. 26. Hambourg (H. M. V.)
 Chabrier: Valses romantiques, M. & Mme. de Lausnay (Decca)
 Chopin: Etudes (complete) Lortat (Fr. Col.)
 Debussy: Arabesques, Marguerite Long (Fr. Col.)
 Debussy: Prelude and Sarabande, Tagliafero (Fr. H. M. V.)
 Liszt: 2nd Hungarian Rhapsody, Rosenthal (Ultradisc)
 Mendelssohn: 9 Songs Without Words, Friedman (Col.)
 Scarlatti: Sonata in D, and Gluck-Brahms: Gavotte, Vines (Fr. Col.)

Violin

Bach: 2 menuets from 6th sonata, and prelude from 1st sonata for solo violin, Henry Merckel (Fr. Col.)
 Lalo: Symphonie Espagnole (in part), Hubermann (Brunswick-Polydor)

Organ

Bach: Prelude in E flat, Weitz (H. M. V.)
 Mendelssohn: 3rd Sonata, A major, Bullock (H. M. V.)

Guitar

Ponce: Sonata, Cançion, Postudio, Segovia (Sp. H. M. V.)

Choral

Fauré: Requiem Mass (complete) Morturier and Malnory-Marseilliac with the Bach Society, conducted by Bret (Fr. H. M. V.)
 Gretschchaninow (arr): Three Cossack Songs, Don Cossacks Choir (Col.)

Operatic

Massenet: Werther (complete), Vallin, Feraldy, Thill, etc., conducted by Cohen (Fr. Col.)
 Chapi: El Rey que Rabio (complete zarzuela), Isaura, Albiach, Parra, etc., with Teatro del Liceo Co. (Sp. H. M. V.)
 Barber of Seville—Largo al Factotum, and Ballo in Maschere—Alla vita, Schlusnus (Brunswick-Polydor)
 Bartered Bride—Weiss ich doch eine, Schmidt and Bohnen (Ultradisc)
 Cenerentola—Aria and Rondo finale, Supervia (Parlo.)
 Jongleur de Notre-Dame—Legend of the Sage, Vanni-Marcoux (Fr. H. M. V.)
 Magic Flute—O Isis, and Freischütz—Hier im irdischen Jammertal, Emanuel List (Parlo.)
 Otello—Iago's air, Hüsch (Parlo.)
 Siegfried—Duet from Act 3, Bäumer and Minten (Parlo.)
 Tannhäuser—Dich teure Hall and Elisabeths Gebet, Lotte Lehmann (Parlo.)
 Walküre—Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Scene, Boeckelmann (Parlo.)

Songs

Bianchini: Ninna Nanna and Redentor in famegia, Toti dal Monte (Fr. H. M. V.)
 Holländer: Johnny, and Peter, Marlene Dietrich (Ultradisc)
 Moussorgsky: Serenade and Le Chef d'Armee (from Songs and Dances of Death), Tikanova (Decca)



Ignaz Friedman

Friedman has recently contributed two important albums of larger piano recordings to the English Columbia lists. His Chopin Mazurka and Mendelssohn "Songs Without Words" discs will be welcomed in this country also.

Current Imports

Die Fledermaus

SCHAUSS, JOHANN: *Die Fledermaus*, abridged operetta in twelve parts, arranged by WEIGERT and MAEDER. Conducted by HERMANN WEIGERT (overture by ERICH KLEIBER). POLYDOR Album Set. (6 D12s, Alb., Wordbook).

To those who have heard even one of the numbers from *Die Fledermaus*, it will certainly not be necessary to praise the irresistible nature of its music—they will no doubt already long since have procured this album. To those who have not, one can only say that they should take the first opportunity to make its acquaintance. Every quality that charms or elates one in the waltzes is herein contained, and very often it is even more perfect than in them. *Fledermaus* may in fact be taken as a typical and concentrated expression of the gayest capital in Europe at the height of its glamour. And yet this gaiety is never hard, flashily brilliant, or in any way coarse, but is always tempered by a very delightful sentiment and by a perfect polish and refinement. Withal, this music can probably never become generally comprehensible or sympathetic to the American or the Englishman. People to whom I have played these records have often remained remarkably obtuse to their charm, and has merely remarked that it was all right, but they liked Gilbert and Sullivan much better. Although for the two different peoples (the continental and the English) the two composers fill approximately the same place, that should not for a moment lead us to attempt to equate them or even scarcely to compare them. Strauss' chief qualities are essentially polite and the product of a very brilliant society, he appeals primarily to the sensibilities, the esprit, even the senses; he is by turns fiery and sentimental, but always irresistible. Gilbert and Sullivan are on the whole, much more natural and robust—they make us laugh, not merely smile—often rather wistfully as does Strauss; the effect is usually obtained either by the direct appeal of semi-buffoonery, both in the music and in the words, or by an appeal to the wit as an intellectual faculty rather than the senses. To be sure, the two sometimes attempt the same sort of thing—there is a patter song in the first act of this operetta, and Sullivan frequently gives us a graceful air for soprano, which is, however, always characterized by an almost rural freshness that is essentially English.

It would be gratuitous for me to go into any actual details concerning the libretto or its history, since the accompanying word book with its enthusiastic and appreciative introduction (written, by the way, by the conductor Alois Melichor) is most full in this respect, including photographs, manuscript and programme facsimiles, etc. It should be remarked that following the text, as least until one has learned it, is a most important factor in one's enjoyment of the music, as well as the mere dialogue; for in pursuit of the policy of presenting a chronological and connected version, a great deal of the later is naturally included.

The Overture, played by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Erich Kleiber is not regularly sold with the set, but an extra pocket is provided for it. Recorded some two years earlier than the rest of the records, it suffers from a decided hollowness in the *tutti*s, although otherwise the balance is very good. The chief fault which I have to find with Kleiber's reading may at first sound rather odd; it appears to suffer from over crispness, and even from a super-abundance of vivacity. If he applied this to Mozart it would be perfectly suited, but although we certainly would rather hear anything than dullness, Strauss is improved by, in fact demands, a certain sensuousness and sinuous flow, the phrases and separate notes should not be chopped off to suddenly and brilliantly or half the effect is lost. The rest of the set is as previously under the direction of Hermann Weigert who again proves that he is more than equal to every occasion. In spite of the exigencies of time, his *tempi* and rhythms throughout are admirably chosen. As is proper the singer of the rôle of Adele, Adele Kern, is the best in the cast; although one must regret Elisabeth Schumann who, in the same part, was the chief attraction of the most recent revivals, one is at

the same time forced to admit that Fraulein Kern frequently approaches the ideal. The other principals although slightly inferior, are of such equality that it is scarcely possible to single out one among them for especial praise. The same difficulty is met in attempting to speak of excellences in the records themselves. Certainly, however, Adele's two songs in the first and second acts (on parts one and four) are almost beyond reproach, although her couplet in the scene in the prison does not seem to measure up to the same standard. The recording throughout is rarely extremely remarkable, although the celebrated Finale to act two attains brilliance in this respect, but it is almost always fully adequate, though sometimes the singers do not seem to be placed in the most advantageous position, causing the quality as captured by the microphone to change.

In conclusion, let me warn any who may have been disappointed or disgusted by a recent American stage adaptation, in which the spirit was completely lacking, and the music was treated with even less respect than if it had belonged to a current musical comedy, that they should immediately forget all they saw and heard on that occasion. The music of Strauss, as no other, requires finesse and a very definite technique and the presence here of these qualities is what makes the set so very praiseworthy.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

Operatic

VERDI: *Don Carlos*—*O Don Fatale*, and *Trovatore*—*Condotta Ell'Era in Ceppi*, sung in Italian by MAARTJE OFFERS with orchestral accompaniments under the direction of JOHN BARBIROLI. H. M. V. DB-1158 (D12).

Once in a great while a record discovery like this justifies the ordering of a group sight "unheard" from European sources. Madame Offers is a Dutch contralto who has gained a wide European reputation in the rôles such as Amneris, Dalilah, Azucena and Orpheus. She was the Dalilah of the La Scala revival of 1925 when Toscanini himself conducted and mounted the opera for her.

The present recording shows her voice to be one of great power, and thrilling resonance and depth throughout its wide range. The voice is of beautiful quality and the arias are sung with splendid style and authority. This release be recommended to all those who love a really fine contralto voice, which is becoming more and more difficult to find.

WEBER: *Oberon*—*Ozean du ungeheuer*, sung in German by MARIA NEMETH with the VIENNA STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA under the direction of KARL ALWIN. H. M. V. D-1717 (D12).

Almost every report of current operatic activities in Europe contain some word of this great Hungarian diva whose success has been so phenomenal. This is the second of her records to come to hand and although it is a trifle disappointing after the magnificence of her Queen of Sheba recordings it is still unusually fine. Since this antedates the former recording by many months it is probable that sound engineers have worked intensively upon the problem of recording a voice of such bewildering power and resonance to its great advantage.

The current issue of the "Gramophone" contains word of her engagement for the present Covent Garden season and states that the gramophone has again brought a hearing of a prima donna before her own actual appearance.

MASSENET: *Thais*—*O messager, de Dieu et Baigne D'eau mes mains et mes lèvres*, sung in French by FANNY HELDY and MARCEL JOURNET with orchestral accompaniments under the direction of PIERO COPPOLA. H. M. V. DA-940 (D10).

An ingratiating performance of the finest portion of Massenet's music for the story of the sainted courtesan which will always bring forth in this country the image of Mary Garden. Fanny Heldy's voice is well suited to this music and blends harmoniously with that of Journet. If you like this music you will certainly want to acquire this record because it is a model of French singing, sung by two of the finest French voices. This is the sort of recording that the Victor might have done with Miss Garden instead of letting her waste her talents on uncharacteristic material.

R. B.

Harpsichord Concerto

BACH: *Concerto No. VII*, in G minor, for harpsichord and strings, played by ANNA LINDE and a string orchestra. PARLOPHONE 10879-80, (2 D12s).

The position of these records as embodying the only concerto of Bach's which is so far as I know available played on the original instrument, entitles it to a respect and prominence which under any ordinary competition its actual merits would not justify. But since we are so restricted, we must take what we can get and be thankful—I confess that I much prefer this version to a much better one played on the piano-forte. In fact, after hearing the brilliance and clarity of the harpsichord in this music, and the beautiful way in which it combines with the strings, it is difficult to conceive of substituting a piano, with its heavy rich tone.

Like almost every one of the other Clavier concerts, this is a transcription of a concerto in A minor for violin and orchestra. As here divided the first movement is on part one, the second occupies part two and half of three, and the finale the rest. Unfortunately, although selected for such an unique honour, the music is not the best of the works in this form, but it is nevertheless very good: the slow movement has a richness and nobility which is not easily surpassed, and the final *Allegro assai* is of much interest.

The chief criticism which can be made of the whole is the heaviness and lack of resilience which is very noticeable in the fast movements. In the first, the solo instrument does not seem to be well-placed and has a rather different and poorer tone than in the rest of the work. In the last, which is obviously intended as somewhat of a show piece, the harpsichordist would have done well to exhibit somewhat more brilliance and rhythmic variety and elasticity. Although there also heaviness is not absent, the *Andante* is from every point of view the most successful—the instrument makes the parts stand out perfectly, and its coolness of tone imparts a singular purity to the mood. The dynamic changes used are in general those of the Bachgesellschaft edition, but there is occasionally a tendency to emphasize the solo instrument almost too much. The whole interpretation gives an impression of solidity and workman-likeness, which, though not extremely exciting, I find decidedly preferable to a flashy exploitation. Would that one could hope for more such treasures.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

German language course

SIEPMANN: *German Language Course*, first two lessons, (based on Siepmann's "Primary German Course"). H. M. V. C-2108-12 (5 D12s, Textbook).

An electrically recorded course of German lessons has been needed for a long time; Otto Siepmann's comes very opportunely. It is based on his own "Primary Course," published by Macmillan—a standard text book for many years in British schools. His recent broadcasts of German lessons elicited so eager a response from the British radio public that H. M. V. has begun to issue the lessons in recorded form. At present only the first five discs are available from the American importers, but new additions to the series are appearing periodically in England.

I have not yet had a chance to examine the course very carefully, but at first glance the textbook appears to be an admirable one. It is perfectly simple, designed indeed for children in the primary grades, and concentrates attention on building up the proper foundation of correct pronunciation. Self-study in German is notoriously difficult, and even in schools the opportunities for limited repetition of the ground work of sound production are limited. Here the text can be followed carefully while the records with their examples of the proper vowel, diphthong, and consonant sounds are being played. The possibilities of repetition are unlimited, so even the slowest student may—by dint of a little perseverance—obtain command over the sounds that come so awkwardly to American tongues. The application of the records as a supplement of school work or as a basis for self-study is obvious, and it is hard to see how they might be bettered for their purpose. No one interested in obtaining a solid foundation in the German language should overlook them.

Orchestral

DVORAK: *Scherzo Capriccioso*, Op. 66, played by the BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA conducted by ERICH KLEIBER. ULTRAPHON E-655 (D12).

I cannot find much in this work to admire greatly. Its principal theme has a good tumultuous energy, but the contrasting theme is blandly sentimental and quite destroys the music's acquired momentum. Kleiber plays it in his customary vigorous, sure-handed manner, but scarcely succeeds in charging it with any genuine life for all its bombast and fury. The recording favors the wood winds and horns; the strings are inclined to shrillness, and the basses are practically inaudible.

GRAINGER: *Mock Morris*, and McEWEN: *Tempo di Valse (Lento)* (from "The Jocund Dance"), played by the PHILHARMONIC CHAMBER ORCHESTRA conducted by CHARLES KRESHOVER. EDISON BELL Winner 5144 (D10).

Knowing McEwen's "Solway" symphony, recorded in the acoustical days by Vocalion, I expected more of the *Tempo di Valse* played here. It is expressive, simple, and avoids banality and the saccharine, but more can hardly be said for it. The *Mock Morris* is another matter. One of Grainger's best tunes, it is tossed off here with just the right esprit and snap. Kreshover made his recording debut in the N.G.S. set of Juon's Chamber symphony. He is a promising man and should be given the opportunity to do some work in the little tilled chamber orchestral field. I imagine Edison Bell will keep him to comparative trifles like these, but his abilities are revealed even here. The recording gives a good idea of the orchestra's well-balanced playing.

Ira Instruments

WEBER: *Invitation to the Waltz*, two parts, played by the BAND OF H. M. LIFE GUARDS, conducted by LIEUT. W. J. GIBSON. BROADCAST TWELVE 5132 (D 10).

This is a rather stiff and uninspired performance of Weber's off-played "Invitation." It has not sufficient life and resiliency to be satisfying. The recording is rather good at the beginning but seems to decline as the sound-box approaches the center.

FLORODORA—*Selection*, two parts, played by the BAND OF H. M. WELSH GUARDS, conducted by CAPTAIN ANDREW HARRIS. BROADCAST TWELVE 5132 (D 10).

Played with a rather cheap vivacity, this music does not make much impression. Either "Florodora" is dead, or this is not a very good selection. The well-known Sextet is the only number here that attracts.

COSTA: *A Frangesa*, march, and COLE: *La Grive* (The Thrush) played by the BAND OF H. M. LIFE GUARDS. BROADCAST TWELVE 577 (D 10).

The march, which is only a moderately good one, is played very well, with a vocal refrain. *La Grive*'s chief interest evidently lies in a piccolo solo (played by S. McBride)—at any rate, it cannot be said to have any other.

Orchestrola

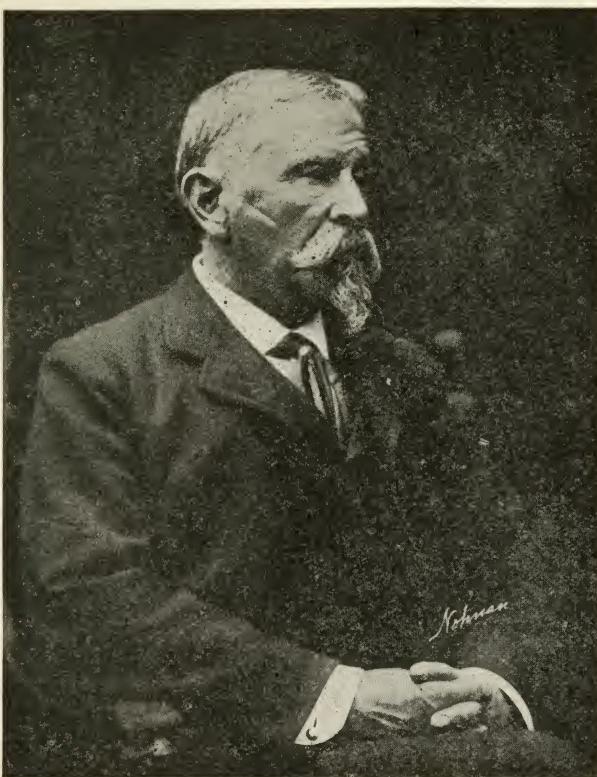
The diminutive Orchestrola record No. 4104 carries two unfamiliar operatic numbers by one CESARE PALAGI, bass, whose name I have not heard before. They are "Als Bublein Klein" from Nicolaï's opera, the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and an aria from *Der Waffenschmied* by Lortzing, the author of the semi-forgotten *Zar und Zimmermann* and the almost unknown *Undine*. Nicolaï's opera still retains its vogue in Germany and excerpts from Lortzing's operas occur from time to time on records; Polydor has issued an aria from *Undine* (73086) and from *Zar und Zimmermann* (66608) both by Heinrich Schlusnus, and there is a recording by the Berlin Philharmonic of the Overture to *Der Waffenschmied* (19901).

The orchestrola numbers are sung excellently by Palagi and should be an excellent collector's item since the composers are important figures in any comprehensive review of modern German opera of the last century. The size of this record, small as it is, does not seem to limit the playing time and the recording is quite clear and free from surface noise.

R. B.

The Phonophile's Bookshelf

To the Memory of Henry Higginson



Henry Higginson

THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, 1881-1931. By M. A. De Wolfe Howe. Semi-centennial Edition. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Co. 272 pages, \$2.50.

The great Boston orchestra has ended its fiftieth year of existence in a blaze of glory and it is not unfitting that to commemorate the semicentennial this comprehensive volume should have been completely revised and supplemented in collaboration with John N. Burk of the Symphony Hall staff.

The book is prefaced with a reproduction of the Sargent painting of Colonel Higginson and the entire work reflects this beginning even as the orchestra does his remarkable foresight and judgment in creating one of America's greatest artistic organizations. For it was he who made it possible and carried it through until the time when, laden with the cares of war and the sadness of the misunderstanding about Dr. Muck he gave it into the hands of a board of trustees. (The Muck episode, by the way, is briefly but exceedingly discreetly mentioned. Tardy as it is, this belated semi-official exoneration of Muck might well have been couched in more certain and less politic terms.)

The record tells of war-time difficulties, the short tenure of Rabaud, the constructive work of Monteux not only against the abortive strike and the subsequent re-building of the orchestra but against the indifference of the large public of the orchestra until the resounding tread of the *Rite of Spring* was heard, and finally the latter day triumphs of Dr. Serge Koussevitsky and his festival activities which crowned this year with the Bach Festival and new highwater marks in repertoire and performance.

The appendices, which are remarkably complete and well-compiled, comprise complete lists of works performed through-

out fifty years by the orchestra, the soloists, members of the orchestra and conductors, Bliss Perry's memorable address on Colonel Higginson, and a catalogue of the Casadeus collection of ancient instruments.

Phonophiles will note with interest the complete list of the records by the Boston Symphony orchestra on the outside cover and will perhaps wonder why it was not made a permanent part of the book and why there is no reference to the recordings issued several years ago under Dr. Muck's baton.

The original edition of Mr. Howe's book has long been one of the most important histories of a leading American orchestra. The present revision brings it up to date in interesting and informative fashion.

RICHARDSON BROWN

Our American Music

OUR AMERICAN MUSIC. By John Tasker Howard. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 736 pages. 86 Illustrations. \$6.00.

The first pages of Mr. Howard's preface reveal him as a modest and assiduous compiler rather than an outspoken analyst and critic. Going through his hefty volume one never offended by a hint of indecorous comment or aroused by a flash of original thought. Page after page mount list on description, quotation on polite laudation,—all quite in the best manner of such American composers as the academic Paine or Parker, whose musical language gave offense to none, and stimulation to precisely as many. Leaning backward in his extreme modesty, he forbears to mention his own name even in the lists of the multitudinous composers of his school, whose myriad innocuous songs, piano pieces, and choral works form the bulk of music composed in this country.

Turning his last page one regretfully concludes that the significant word on American music has yet to be said. Mr. Howard had the opportunity but passed it by. Yet his diligent labors—and obviously they were considerable—were by no means pointlessly expended. *Our American Music* is a convenient comprehensive survey of three hundred years of composition in America. It collects a wealth of material into extremely handy form. The extensive indices, bibliographies, and references make his book invaluable to any student of the subject. By very reason of the ground it covers and the various personalities include it cannot fail to be interesting. It is neatly enough written—Mr. Howard is an experienced musical journalist—and tastefully sauced with anecdote and contemporary quotation. It is only when one compares his handling of such men as Billings, Foster, and Victor Herbert with the studies of the same men in Isaac Goldberg's *Tin Pan Alley*, or when one contrasts his remarks on MacDowell, Gershwin, Copland and the younger men with Paul Rosenfeld's brief *An Hour with American Music*, that his fear of speaking out forcibly and vividly reveals his impotence of thought and language.

An outline of the contents will give an idea of the enormous amount of ground covered and of the book's very real value for reference purposes. There are three main divisions: "Euterpe in the Wilderness"—Early Days, First Composers, Latter 18th Century; "Euterpe Clears the Forest"—First National Airs Turn of the Century, 19th Century Background in Secular Music, Foreign Invasion of 1848, Awakening of a National Consciousness; "Euterpe Builds Her American Home"—Songs of the Civil War, Spread of Musical Culture, Parents of Our Contemporaries, The Boston Group, Church Music, We Climb the Heights (Nevin and MacDowell!), Folk-Music, Contemporary Composers, Lighter Musical Moments. In addition to the detailed index there are three important appendices: a list of published orchestral and chamber music compositions by American composers, prize winners in contests for American composers sponsored by the National Federation of Music Clubs, and an elaborate bibliography.

The phonophile will regret the scant attention paid to recorded music. There is only passing mention of records, although the great repertory of popular and semi-folk music on discs is a source of inestimable significance to the thorough investigator. There is no mention at all made of the recordings (few though they may be) of works by Schelling, Gershwin, MacDowell, Carpenter, etc.

Mention of the few recorded larger American works reminds me to ask—with an editorial writer in *Musical America* for May 10—what has become of the Victor prize works? Last summer Victor's symphonic prize of \$25,000 was divided among Robert Russell Bennett, Ernest Bloch, Louis Gruenberg, and Aaron Copland. *Musical America* "understands" that the five prize compositions have been recorded and deplores their long-delayed public presentation both on records and in broadcast. "The withholding of these works from the public must be a sore disappointment also to the composers. A creative artist who has put months, even years, of labor into a composition cannot view with pleasure its shelving for so long a time. Has not the edge of interest felt in this composition been dulled by the delay? More, the cause of American music has not been served. . . . The creative process is not completed until the composer finds his public."

Music is stirring in America. Much has been written of genuine worth, but the awakening of a national musical consciousness has barely begun. It has yet to bear full fruit. Mr. Howard, like so many before him, collects, describes, surveys, but in bloodless fashion. The history of American music to date is of importance largely as it points the pitfalls to be avoided in the future and the direction in which profitable progress can be made. Insight and courage are needed to stamp all our excursions down blind alleys with the hall-mark of sterility and futility. Mr. Howard has contributed a fine reference book to the already crowded shelves of our musical filing cases, but he has contributed scarcely an iota to our critical understanding of American music and its future evolution.

R. D. D.

Another Japanese Phonomagazine

THE RECORDED MUSIC. Published by Meikyoku-Do, 22 Omotesarugaku-cho, Kanda-ku, Tokio, Japan. Yearly subscription rate, \$1.25 in Japan.

Our good Japanese friends, Mr. F. Fujita, who first made us acquainted with the phonographic magazine, *The Gramophone* (reviewed in the February, 1931 issue of the P. M. R.), has kindly sent us a copy of another Japanese periodical devoted to the phonograph and recorded music. *The Recorded Music* is the outgrowth of the *Meikyoku Times*, published in Tokio for several years, and which enjoys a wide circulation throughout Japan. The regular contributors are C. Nomura, K.

Hoshijima, J. Sengoku, J. Owaki, and F. Fujita. For our convenience, Mr. Fujita has furnished a translation of the list of contents of the March issue sent us: Taste for Gramophones, Historical Record Collection (V)—Beethoven, Passing Away of Madame Nelba, Third Symphony of Brahms, About Mischa Elman, About Geraldine Farrar, News from America and Europe, Pelleas and Meslisande, Reviews of March and April records, From Schubert to Wolf, Questions and Answers, Editor's Remarks, etc. There are about 80 pages in the March issue (rather more than in *The Gramophone*.) it is plentifully illustrated and seems well supported by Japanese advertisers. Even to occidental eyes it seems to have a lively and progressive air. We wish it the best of success.

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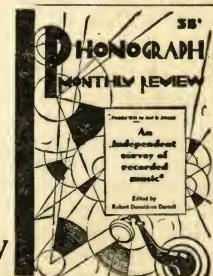
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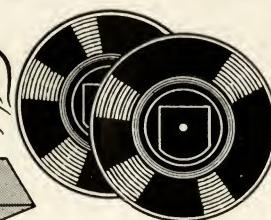
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